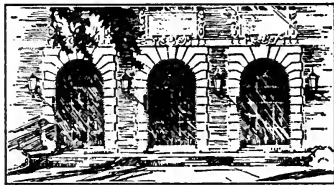


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*Copy Henry Howard
Feb 1821*

HERALINE;

OR,

OPPOSITE PROCEEDINGS.



BY

LÆTITIA-MATILDA HAWKINS.



IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



Quand on ne trouve pas son repos en soi-même, il est inutile
de le chercher ailleurs.—ROCHEFOUCAULT.



THE SECOND EDITION.



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HERALINE.

CHAPTER I.

THE spring was advancing and the weather warm ; and Lady Lynford's avowed dislike to London led to the realization of a plan, which the colonel now brought forward, by which she might be removed from it, and the inconvenience of his confinement to a spot would be done away. Mr. Bray's curacy was within three miles of this station ; and he could tell of a very pretty house and garden, just then vacant, in his parish, which would accommodate the two families of the viscountess and baroness, if they could be content with a few servants. The property might be hired for a longer or shorter time, at the option of any tenant—it was very retired, but rural—on the edge of the county of Surry, and communicating very easily and pleasantly with Middlesex.

Made prisoner as was the heart of Lady Lynford, and subjugated under a sensation amounting to more than affectionate respect for the colonel,

and very little short of awful fear, she received as a proof of tenderness, for which she was grateful, this scheme of indulgence for her ; and no time was lost in completing an agreement for this temporary abode, for four months, which, as he observed, would secure the ladies an agreeable residence as long as they could want it, or his particular situation make it a convenience. He took the trouble of inspecting the place, and brought so accurate and so favourable an account of it, that Lady Lynford was perfectly satisfied to form her judgment on his report ; and nothing was now thought on, but this rural retreat.

Lord Lynford's will, on being referred to, showed that the baroness was not confined to London during the whole of the six months allotted for her introduction. Provided she was, for that space, under the protection of Lady Drummannon, and that the purpose of this protection was in general answered, there was no restriction as to place. This now chosen, was the vicinage of a royal residence, and abounded in elegant villas. The viscountess had no objection to the scheme. She could, at this time of the year, very profitably let her town-house ; and as the expense of that in the country, and the maintenance of the whole party might be transferred to the baroness's exchequer, there was no sacrifice demanded, but of society, which, for the short space of time it

would continue attractive in town, might well be foregone for greater purposes.

But still many things called for consideration; and many more called for it from Colonel Wau-
ston, than the baroness thought worth attention. His delicacy for the poor persecuting idiot-girl, made him, he said, 'perhaps too demanding on the point of secrecy: at his military station he was safe; but should the poor pitiable creature hear that any of his friends were near him, she would inevitably find her way to them, and might be very troublesome. Of no one was she more likely to conceive a jealousy than of Lady Lynford; therefore it would be of importance to let every thing appear, as much as possible, connected with the viscountess, who, he did not doubt, as a security against the mischiefs of gossiping, would compose her household of her own servants, leaving Lady Lynford's to await her return to town.'

All this was very gently urged, or rather submitted; and Lady Lynford having but one voice in the assembly, it was soon settled for her, that she should be considered as the guest of Lady Drum-cannon—should use her carriage—and, in short, endure an eclipse till the end of her minority. The colonel was ready with an expedient for every rising difficulty; and not a few came forward to exercise his genius, in the disposal of various

points of œconomy. Some might have been too untractable for his management, had not a part of the servants whom the baroness had brought from St. Emeril's, very soon taken fright at the dirt and darkness of London, and begged to be allowed to go back and wait for her. Her upper man-servant, one footman, and her groom, were the only emigrants that remained with her; and of these, the two former were to be left in town. — The viscountess dreading, as she said, 'a fine London lady's-woman,' would have proffered Miss Wyerley's services in lieu of those of Mrs. Parr's niece; but for her attendance and that of her groom with the riding-horses, the baroness conditioned.—Not feeling any ambition to exhibit her liveries and designations in connexion with Lady Drumcannon's old landau, she suffered a pair of horses and a coachman to be hired in the viscountess's name, though at her cost; and unable, even at a moment which was not without its anxieties, to repress the natural spirit of her fantastic mind, she almost endangered the permanency of the contract, by remarking on the proportion of expense in this business, in which she furnished the L. and Lady Drumcannon the D.

It was necessary to inform Mr. Meryon of this proceeding; and the terms in which it would bear to be described, were such as to give courage in writing on it. She represented herself as never

entirely recovered from her late cold, as disgusted with London, and panting for the sight of spring in its natural abode. Then came a flourishing portrait of the locality of the villa; and, for fear Mr. Meryon should be anxious for her comfort in such close quarters with persons for whom she expressed so little liking, she endeavoured to convince him that her expectations were moderated by experience—that, though they had their oddities, they were, on the whole, endurable, and such as she could very well tolerate for this period.—She concluded this part of her letter with a complimentary wish to be again with him; and something which she seemed not to dictate to her pen, but which she had not power to control, said, or seemed to say, that she wished she had never left him.—The good old man, probably, only took this for a second member of the compliment.

Under a strict injunction to secrecy, and, perhaps, with a view to seem universally confidential, because she knew that she was only partially communicative, she now let him into the history of Goody Parr's tender passion. It could not be treated with more degrading ridicule—every thing that any one might have said of the baroness herself, at this moment—did she say of poor Goody;—and to give Mr. Meryon a firm reliance on the readiness of her prudence whenever called

forth, she repeated to him what she had said to her, to dissuade her from this incongruous association. Mr. Meryon could not read this gay epistle, and remain unconvinced of the propriety of sentiment which must be paramount in the mind of his ward, however she might have diverted herself at Lord Winchmore's expense.

The remove to Aspen-grove—so was the villa dubbed—was safely accomplished; and, in a guise not at all resembling her usual style, Lady Lynford took up her abode there.—The old landau conveyed herself, the viscountess, with stick and ear-trumpet, two birds, a dog, and bandboxes—a large medicine-chest, and a footstool:—in a hired post-chaise came Mrs. Parr, her niece, and Miss Wyerley, crowded up to the eyes, with boxes and bundles;—the stage brought 'the household,' consisting of three maid-servants—the foot-boy clung to the carriage that conveyed the ladies.

The house, indeed, in no point contradicted the detail of its particulars.—Whatever was the disparity between expectations and realizations, must be included in the dissimilarity of tastes, and the inability of words to convey the same images to all organic constructions.—But, had Lady Lynford been brought to see the mansion, with a view to occupying it, and without any leading prepossession in favour of its eulogist, she would have said something very different from

what she had said. Between the time of expressing her wish and its completion, the weather had—as it is, alas! apt to do in the kingdom of Great Britain, and especially in the spring—changed from ‘summer’s heat to winter’s cold’—from dry to wet, and from an aspect of confident promise, to one of dejecting doubt:—the rain had indeed ceased; but all the chilliness remained; and the water stood in lakes upon a rushy common, where vegetation seemed rather swimming than rooting, and on the selvidge of which common was to be found ‘all that capital messuage, called Aspen-grove.’

The house itself had a responsible appearance:—it stood within a wall which environed the garden, and was, though old, and in some measure—like most houses offered in the same way to the passers-by—out of repair, not sordid; but Lady Lynford shrunk, even more than she had done at the sight of the smoke-tinged furniture in Grosvenor-square, at the small accommodations of Aspen-grove; and she learnt now, perhaps for the first time, that her own ‘lot’ had, indeed, ‘fallen in a good ground,’ not to be recovered if departed from, even by the power of money.

A few days settled her in all her discomforts, of which she saw enough to make her substitute for the abstract enjoyment of this country-resi-

dence, the consolation of numbering-off the days as they passed. The colonel saw her daily ; but his visit was an hour's sunshine in a gloomy day—the day was over when he was gone.

Sunday came, and there was no avoiding the parish-church and Mr. Bray, whose daily calls-in and occasional offers to say grace, gave quite enough of his company and conversation to those not particularly interested in his loves or his doctrines. Yet he must be endured, out of regard to Mrs. Parr, who seemed proof against any thing that even the baroness could say or devise to torment her.—The old landau carried the four females—for under the title of ladies, they cannot all be comprehended—to the church ; and Lady Lynford, offended highly by the manner in which the service was read, and made still more irritable by seeing Goody Parr aping ecstasies, was very ill disposed to sit out the sermon ; but every thing was at stake if she sounded a retreat, and she therefore, but in no very gracious manner, armed herself with patience.

In her religious duties she had not relaxed, in her absence from St. Emeril's.—Sunday was observed with great propriety in her family ; and she had pride and pleasure in setting the example. She was herself a good scripturist ; and if she had not thought very intently on doctrinal points, she had penetrated with sagacity to their best founda-

tion. In her ardent impetuous way, she had made skeletons of arguments; and thus, getting rid of all irrelevant matter, as the adulteration of that which was in itself genuine, she was daily becoming better acquainted with truth, and less inclined to accept its counterfeit.

If Mr. Bray, in his private assistances of the old viscountess's devotions, had felt himself compelled to observe one method, there was now an opportunity for his obtaining better praise: his congregation was small, and of a very humble description, for nobody, of any gentility, had yet left London; and Lady Lynford would have been abundantly content with such preaching as would have been profitable to little market-gardeners and their servants; but, instead of using the broad basis of an incontrovertible truth on which a judicious divine would have founded an useful deduction—instead of expounding or explaining,—instead of using the language of common-sense and established convention, Mr. Bray revelled in a display of fabricated theories, for which a nomenclature was to be framed, to be again explained by definitions entirely at the mercy of the theorist. And when, descending from single-handed controversy, he came down to belief connected with practice, the baroness could not sit in any quietness, to hear Christianity traduced by his applause, or

herself invited to repose in one of those easy-chairs of presumed attainment, which are described as the highest point of ambition to the disciples of a mistaken school. She knew the situation of mankind, the predicament in which they stood, the jeopardy in which they were involved, their means of safety in this world and their prospect in the next; and acquainted with the grandeur of prophecy and the simple dignity of the gospel, she could not endure to find substituted for the one a tortuous play upon words, and for the other, a jargon that left in utter disconnexion, the only authority on which it could support its claim to attention.

But independence was mouldering away, even while she fancied it in her grasp. Mr. Bray must be borne with; for he was inevitable; and Mrs. Parr had intimated, that if her situation was made worse, she could withdraw to her own relations in Devonshire, while Mr. B. was getting his house in order for her; and Lady Drumcannon was so much an object of attention to the colonel, that, to offend *her*, was, perhaps, to alienate *him*; and even Miss Wyerley seemed to have her influence. If there was any person who had no part in the drama of Aspen-grove, it was Mrs. Parr's niece; and there was about her, an air of disapprobation, that made Lady Lynford afraid of be-

traying her own uncomfortable feelings, lest the young woman should break out, and render it impossible to keep things together, for the short time that this dependence could subsist.

The amusements of Aspen-grove, when Mr. Bray neither bestowed himself on the party, nor called them to listen to him, were variously monotonous. Lady Druncannon aired twice in the day, once in her carriage, and again in a garden-chair, drawn by her foot-lad.—In the intervals of the daylight, she read novels and controversy—in the evening, somebody must, perforce, play cards with her. Mrs. Parr was engaged deeply in the preparation of her wedding-stock of good clothes, thinking it, as she observed, ‘very necessary to show the people what she was, at once.’—‘No danger of your failing in that point, Goody,’ said the baroness—‘you will not want even *me* there, or I would sit up for company with you.’

Miss Wyerley’s occupations were always at hand, when her principal could dispense with her assiduities—they were too common for description;—but Lady Lynford was not so easily accommodated. Under the gentle cautions of the colonel against drawing on him the renewed persecution of the idiot-girl, she forbore wandering from the house, and contented herself in her morning-exercise, with the circuit of the garden, in which the

cankered fruit-trees, now trying to be in blossom like the others of their species, told a tale of former vigour, that might, by care, have been longer preserved; while the walls to which they were forced to unite themselves, seemed, by the insidious medium of moss and lichen, to have accelerated the decay of that which they supported. But she saw, as yet, no resemblance to her own situation.

The day was hailed as fortunate, which admitted of exercise on horseback. She had no attendant but her groom, and the colonel had pointed out that which he thought the only pleasant ride;—it was a lane at the back of the house, which divided garden grounds, and led round by such another lane to the house again. Here, once, she unexpectedly met him, and he turned his horse to accompany her home; an accident that was inducement sufficient to pursue the same path in future.

At home, the hours lagged so lazily, that it was necessary to find rods for them, even if a nettle now and then stung the hand that applied them. The discarded occupations were recalled, and industrious habits resumed, not as the increase of happiness, but to beguile the want of it.—Still it was all to have an end: July was to be the termination of every chagrin, and the first week in August, she trusted, would see her restored to dear St. Emeril's, in possession of Mr. Meryon's

forgiveness and yielding approbation of her choice. To her home and him, she meant to return while still her own mistress: her persevering entreaty was to be successful in prevailing on him to bestow her on the colonel—all was to be well; and all were to be happy at St. Emeril's.—At present, indeed, every movement which she made, like that of an expiring fly under the operations of a spider, only drew round her another gentle but irresistible ligament;—but all would be well in August.

CHAPTER II.

JUNE came—Mr. Meryon's letters expressed his satisfaction in his ward's being out of London,—the weather was lovely—the common was dry—Lady Druncannon was in her best health—the airings were extended—places of curiosity were visited—and the little priest and Mrs. Parr, 'to prevent,' as she said, 'hurry and confusion at last,' united themselves. The termination of something gave hope of termination to all things; and, excepting the colonel's visits, there was hardly any thing in her present circumstances, which the baroness would not with satisfaction have seen brought to a conclusion.

July came; and nothing yet indicated preparation. Lady Lynford had so often been told that things were done without applying to her, which, she supposed, awaited her concurrence, that she had almost ceased from asking; but now, taking advantage of a walk, or rather a pacing in the garden, with the colonel, under the shade of some high trees, and where she could see little but the foot-marks which her often-anxious steps had worn in the grass, she ventured to ask if it was not

‘time to think.’—Could the leaves of the trees have spoken, every one would have said, ‘Yes, yes, it has long been time to think:’—but even this warning she might not have heard:—‘there is still time to think,’ would have been no permission to her to think of herself.

The colonel having made himself master of her meaning, proceeded, with his usual deliberation, to convince her that her thinking would be superfluous, and met every point on which she had proposed to bestow thought. Mrs. Bray could save her the trouble of a journey to town: she could arrange any thing in Grosvenor-square—and their absence from it, needed not be long, if any thing made it convenient to her to be there again.—Her new carriages might be ordered for the ensuing spring—at present, he thought the re-painting her travelling-chariot, for which, as far as respected colour, she had already given orders, would suffice—just at this time, his consideration for the poor foolish girl made him particularly cautious against alarming the public eye; and, were a carriage to be exhibited in Long Acre, in the usual obtrusion of its broadside on the eye of every passenger, she, who was still in town, and living, poor soul! upon the amusement of driving through the streets, might catch a sight of the pannel, and be troublesome. Under this apprehension, which he was

extremely sorry to be obliged so often to bring forward, it would be perhaps consulting his convenience too much—and, indeed, it was too much to ask or expect,—but it would complete the merit of her great and many sacrifices, if she would content herself with the carriage plain—it was now, for he had seen it, a very good green, and would answer every purpose of the journey, and do for the country whilst they remained there—he himself was a man of no ostentation ; and he knew her to be above all the petty fondness for attracting the public gaze.—He was building a gig for himself ; and were it not for the restraint imposed on him by his feelings, he should be most happy to use it to make her better acquainted with the pretty country she was in.

Lady Lynford's arm was within his as he spoke ; and if there was any thing short of satisfaction in this reply, it was made good by his preventing her hand from quitting its hold. She had lived on an eminence too high to admit of scrutiny into the transactions of the plain beneath her—she did not know how much and how little was to be inferred from small things ; but recollecting, perhaps, the value which she set on her own condescensions, she appreciated to the utmost those of the only person who could with impunity make pretensions to condescension towards her.

Of writing to Mr. Meryon, she spoke—and, with a voice almost faltering—as of a duty that must be performed quickly—and of her wardrobe, as of a necessity that would not bear neglect. A reply from Mr. Meryon would settle many points, and direct the course to be pursued—she wished it done; for it oppressed her mind in the prospect.

With one request the colonel answered to the first of these suggestions. Would she indulge him only by postponing this for one fortnight?—At the end of that time, her wish should be his law; but he had a plan in his thoughts, which, he flattered himself, would spare her much uneasiness, but which, till the expiration of the time he had mentioned, he could not divulge. She might be assured nothing escaped his attention where she was concerned. As to her wardrobe, he had, he was ashamed to say, a similar suit to urge, which to no other lady in the world could he offer with the hope of being heard—the poor idiot-girl was indefatigable in her pursuit of wedding-preparations: it was one of her instruments of persecution, to describe to him the fine veils and other delicacies in bridal *paraphernalia*. Her departure now drew very near; and he hoped it would afford time for the execution of the baroness's orders; but he was sure that if it did not, Lady

Lynford would be content to have her clothes sent down to her—he asked only this fortnight's pause; and, at the end of that time, he pledged himself to be prepared with an unexceptionable arrangement of every particular.—He lengthened his visit half an hour, and even when mounting his horse, returned into the house, recollecting that her eyes glistened more than usual, when he let fall her hand and she turned away from him.—The kindness was not lost on her: she wondered how she could have a care for herself, when so much was shown for her.

The fortnight wore away with no other episode than two long and most affectionate letters from her guardian, in which he congratulated himself on having lived to see her, at least in his mind's eye, returning—he bade her not expect to find him in quite as good preservation as when she departed—he called to her recollection the great proportion which six months bore to the period of life that could now, at the longest, be allotted him; but he spoke of himself as preparing to join in the dance when her presence should gladden St. Emeril's, and talked of renewed happiness when the anxiety the now-terminating separation had caused him, should entirely cease.

It was to contemplate the smile of a sleeping

infant under the approach of a dagger, to read these expressions with the consciousness of what was meditated. On the day when the last of the two letters arrived, the colonel was prevented from seeing the baroness ; and she had to endure alone all the weight of something scarcely lighter than remorse. A wild idea came into her mind of the possibility of getting away, and returning clandestinely to St. Emeril's.—But, against this, all her want of practical knowledge of the world discouraged her. She could not doubt that she should be pursued and overtaken with disgrace. Another measure suggested itself—that of calling Mr. Meryon to her by a private letter ; but these plans, if pursued, would, either of them, lead inevitably to the breach of her engagement ; and she could not answer for her own fortitude when put to such a trial.—Publicity of the most unpleasant kind must follow, and from this, under the abasing sense of her own large contribution to her present misery, she shrunk appalled.—Her wish for the presence of Mr. Meryon still, however, predominated over every other feeling ; and if she could think on any thing with comfort, it was on the warning that she herself had uttered, of the danger attending her being separated from him.

The conceded fortnight expired ; and the colonel was punctiliously exact in coming to per-

form his promise. The first topic which he brought forward was that important one, her settlements—a matter which, he said, he meant to cut short, by executing a bond, obliging him, within three months after her marriage, to make such arrangements with regard to her property, as should meet the approbation of Mr. Meryon. This delicate attention to her guardian, with whom she had supposed this affair would be transacted, went far in removing her uneasiness, and disposed her to listen more favourably than she might otherwise have done, to a plan for the wedding itself, totally unlike any thing she had imagined.

It was almost an insult to her judgment to plead the common fallacy, of ‘the prudence of prevention in cases of opposition;’—but there was nothing else left to induce her to the desperate measure of making her marriage precede the revelation of her intention. On this point she resisted; but, sparing as the colonel had been of expressions of passionate tenderness, a very small exertion of agreeable sophistry went far; and what appeared a candid unbiassed reference, being made to the viscountess, she, on her knowledge in such cases, advised the expedient. This strong post surrendered, Lady Lynford was unable to contest any other. The parish-church where they were, would answer every purpose. Mr. Bray’s

good offices were at hand ; and only by delaying her return to St. Emeril's one fortnight, the whole might be conducted with the utmost privacy, by having the banns mumbled from the desk.—Immediately after the ceremony, having every thing in readiness, they would set off for Devonshire : she might write previously to acquaint Mr. Meryon with ‘ what had occurred ; ’ and she might depend on it, that ‘ from a man of so kind a heart—if she truly represented him—she had nothing more to apprehend than a few affectionate tears, previous to his giving them both his cordial blessing.’

Acquiescence under such circumstances, was submission, not adoption ; and, with tears that more than glistened in her eyes, she ended the discussion by saying, ‘ Do as you think best.’

She was now within twelve days of the period that released her from her guardian's authority ; and the three Sundays after it, were requisite for the publication of the banns. The time was more than ever tedious ; and when it was necessary to ask Mr. Meryon's patience, it was hardly possible to make the straight line of truth bend to the purpose. But consistently with the character of our worst enemy, he cannot always work in opposition to us ; and he now exerted his privilege of misleading by indulgence, at a moment when his ser-

vices were particularly acceptable.—‘What *shall* I say? What *can* I say? What *is it possible* to say in excuse for this breach of engagement, and the distress it will occasion poor Meryon?’ were questions repeated without profit.—That of ‘What *ought* I to do?’ might, like most of those connected with an honest performance of duty, have been far more readily and satisfactorily answered. From night to morning, and from morning till night, was the task deferred, till sitting down to it at the least convenient time, and still utterly destitute of means to veil the truth or soften the blow, she was roused from her deep but barren meditation, by a shock given to the floor of the room, and by the immediate concourse of feet, summoned by the shrill pipe of Miss Wyerley.

Glad to escape from herself, she went towards the staircase to learn the cause of these movements—looking down, she saw turned up towards her, the still pert face of Miss Wyerley, who had only to tell, that poor dear Lady D. in eating the last mouthful of her veal-cutlet-nooning, had fallen off her chair in a fit—‘Can I be of service?’ said Lady Lynford.

‘O! no, no, none upon earth, my dear creature—she’ll only frighten you to death—keep where you are—no use upon earth in your coming—I believe it’s all over—we’ve sent for the doctor,

I suppose he'll blister and bleed of course—and perhaps cup her—I'll just send over for Mrs. Bray—I suppose living with you so long, she's used to such things.'—The baroness was awe-struck—she sat down and shook from head to foot—she felt an influence, not of this world.—The use that she might make of this accident, did not long fail her recollection; but she seemed to herself too much indulged, and tremendously furnished with the excuse she was seeking.—' Good Heavens !' said she, ' how appalling !—It is as if, when I was murmuring at darkness, a flash of lightning had been sent to teach me my presumption by terrifying me—O ! when shall I be quiet ?—When shall I have the comfort of feeling only dejected ?'

She *could* now write to Mr. Meryon; and the circumstances under which she wrote, would account for any tremor of hand—but far less was their influence than that of kin to superstitious horror, in so nearly pressing this awful calamity into the service of falsehood.

The viscountess's seizure had been fatal; and her funeral took place in due time to make way for the baroness's nuptials.

Still more than ever debilitated in mind, and now made fretful by trifles, she received as a new disaster, the request of Mrs. Parr's niece for her dismissal. All her endeavours to learn the rea-

son of this very inconvenient wish, were unavailing. Not even to her aunt, would the young woman account for it: she chose to go, and to go immediately. Miss Wyerley was as much disposed as ever to be useful, and Lady Drumcannon's servants were now at leisure to wait on her; but nothing could reconcile her to the being turned over to those persons for such attendance, as that to which she was very properly habituated. In vain she tried the influence of money and persuasion; she condescended to ask as a favour, that which she ought either to have been able to command or to condemn. While she spoke, the drops rolled from her fine eyes; but the young woman, expressing the highest respect and the most grateful affection, was not to be moved, either to give up her resolution, or to give a reason for it. It was evident that she extremely disliked her aunt's matrimonial connexion; but this, as Lady Lynford was willing to take her into Devonshire, could be no cause for quitting her. It was something she would not tell, but which it might be supposed she could have told.

To assist in overcoming this chagrin, the common attempts were made by Miss Wyerley, to excite her resentment against her servant for the *insolence* of her proceedings; but the only effect of this endeavour was to render still more dis-

agreeable to her, the person who took so unfair a method of doing her a kindness. She would accept no attention from Miss Wyerley; nor would she suffer Mrs. Bray to recover her station, after domesticating herself with the dirty curate. She saw her servant depart, with a feeling of despondency that overwhelmed her; and a very short time made the loss still more distressing to her. Where she had thrown her walking-bonnet, there she found it again, to her inconvenience—returning from her sad pacing on the turf-walk under the trees, and apprehensive that her shoes might be damp, she recollected that she must herself seek those for which she could change them—and when bed-time came, and her fine long hair was to be disposed of, she would almost have sacrificed it, to get out of her embarrassment.

It was evidently far from the wish of Colonel Wanston, that she should engage a new servant; and now, worn down with vexation, she could more easily yield than contend. Still, the future cheered her in prospect; and but for the stormy brook which she must pass to reach it, it might have adequately supported her spirits, but it was no improvement of their strength, to sit and compose over and over again, and destroy as frequently, the letter that was to tell Mr. Meryon of the deception she had been practising, and to

express her confident hope that he could and would forgive it, and again restore her to favour and trust.

At length arrived, and before she had received any reply to her request for his patient expectation of her return, the day that was to put her in full possession of every advantage of her natural situation. She had retired to rest extremely dejected; no sleep had refreshed her; and when she attempted to rise, she found herself unable to do it, without very painful exertion, which she was not inclined to make for the sake of receiving congratulations, that now met her imagination as taunts: her head remained on her pillow all day, and at intervals she cried bitterly, from a strange feeling of commiseration for herself, under evils of her own procuring, and of envy of the happiness of those who were to celebrate her festival at St. Emeril's.

The colonel, alarmed by her seclusion, made his visit very early the next morning; and he could still talk down the self-tormenting spirit that haunted her.

The banns were published once, and consequently she was excluded that day from church—but then, on the other hand, she was freed from the detested cant of Mr. Bray. A relation of his in the law, was employed to draw the instrument that was to stand instead of her settlement; and

as the hours crawled on, she felt comfort in the necessity of attending *herself* to what was requisite for her approaching journey. All pride of appearance was vexed down—for her wedding, the plainest of her morning-dresses would suffice; and in this she would travel. Her men-servants had orders to set forward from Grosvenor-square on an appointed day: her carriage was sent from town; and without any new distress, she arrived at the moment when she must write to Mr. Mer-ryon, in whose silence she felt a withholding of new misery.

Left to the dictation of her own feelings, this letter would have been a most humble and contrite confession of the utter forfeiture of all claim to his regard; but as the colonel was to peruse it, she dared not indulge her integrity. Not till the last moment of the eve of her marriage, could she bring herself to the ungrateful task; and having done it, she threw herself on her bed in her clothes, and took her chance for sleep.

Lady Drummannon's nearest relation had arrived on the news of her demise, and taken under his responsibility the effects belonging to her. The servants had been discharged, but remained in the house for Lady Lynford's accommodation. Whatever related to her, the colonel had put in excel-

lent train ; and there was neither debt nor disorder left behind, to disgrace or annoy her. The very confined expense at which she had been living, made the remittances she received from home, sufficient for all purposes. The colonel was not wanting in care of her and for her ; and the adroitness with which he exercised this care, his knowledge of business, the commanding character of his deportment, added to personal advantages and professional recommendations, to say nought of prepossessions, had at times consoled and supported her, by still assuring her that she had cause to be proud of the sovereign to whom she was about to resign her throne. But these gleams of comfort were now again withdrawn, and the turbulence of her apprehensions, instead of permitting her to sleep, was assuming the character of bodily illness, when Miss Wyerley, with whom she had hoped every thing was finally settled, and whose inevitable service as bridemaid, she intended should be their last connecting link, tapped at the door and begged an audience.

She was admitted ; and her *minauderies* and youthful hesitations were abridged by an authoritative demand of despatch.—In return, she promised as a rare favour, a full revelation of every thing upon her mind. The disclosure began with a very humble request to be allowed to accom-

pany her dear baroness and the dear colonel in their journey.—The unqualified refusal was on Lady Lynford's lips—but a request to be heard out, stopped it.

The rhetoric that was to give a probable chance of success, began with an observation, that 'two married people would certainly want a third by way of agreeable companion, in so long a journey'—'they would find it very dull—and perhaps be tired of one another before they could separate.' The sequel was, 'that having inspected the carriage, and even got into it to calculate, she saw that there would be abundant room,' 'especially as the trunks and boxes were sent off by the Exeter waggon.'—'Of the dear colonel's concurrence, there could be no question, if the baroness only just named the thing'—and 'as to remaining at that sweet place, as she heard it was—though it was ever such a Paradise, she should not think of doing any such thing for the world, unless indeed her la'aship, whom she was sorry to see so poorly, and the dear colonel wished it—*then*, in *that* case indeed, she was their humble servant to command, Harriet Wyerley.'

The hostile propensity easily to take disgust, is one against which minds of vivacity should be guarded; but yet it is almost impossible, sometimes, not to be even more offended with manner than

matter—and if it can be excusable, our baroness may hope to stand excused. She could not descend to many words—raising herself on her elbow, with a countenance that made Miss Wyerley cringe, she pronounced the most decided and deciding refusal, adding, that she was quite as ready to give the same refusal to Colonel Wanstons, if Miss Wyerley meant to employ his mediation, and to risque all the consequences to herself.—Her distress at the moment was nearly sufficient to make her wish the experiment tried.

More courage and less feeling than even Miss Wyerley's, were wanting to persist—the point was given up as hopeless, and the remaining revelation was of her plan for boarding herself with dear Mr. and Mrs. Bray, now that 'she was left upon the wide world.' To this, Lady Lynford had no objection to make—what any one of the three did, was of no interest with her. Perhaps to the weariness superadded by this conflict, Lady Lynford owed three hours of refreshing sleep. The morning broke cheerfully upon her; and the sun seemed to make haste to shine. At the earliest moment when she could in any way fill up her time, she rose, dressed herself, and then falling on her kness, she hoped to compose her spirits by asking the only support that seemed remaining to

her—but in vain—she recollected the lips from which her best instruction had flowed; and her heart said aloud, ‘What a return is this for his endeavour to teach me my duty!’

The colonel was on the turf-walk, and in sight of her window, an hour before the appointed time,—but she drew back out of sight. She could not excuse herself from the early breakfast prepared, or avoid Miss Wyerley’s odious appeals to her for her approbation of the smartness with which she had decorated her person for the occasion. Could she, however, have forced a smile, a cause was not wanting, when, on the colonel’s entrance, and sight of the two ladies, he thanked the bride-elect for her elegant forbearance, and turning to the officiating priestess of the breakfast-table, sternly insisted on the reduction of her embellishments. Words, little short of those called high, ensued—Lady Lynford saw what Colonel Wanston could be, if made angry; but, as she was not likely to make the experiment, she was rather informed than alarmed, and not at all sorry to see his irritability excited for the good purpose of mortifying this insufferable impertinent.

The scene was ludicrous; and, perhaps, to amuse Lady Lynford, Colonel Wanston carried it farther than he otherwise would have done. First, one feature of finery was ordered off, and she re-

turned 'shorn of her beams'—then another peculiar elegance was objected to ; and, having sacrificed this, she was sent to change something else, till, after half a dozen journies to her chamber, she had lost all hope of being mistaken for the bride herself, and was reduced to a plainness of appearance that would serve for the rest of the day, whatever might be the demand on her notability.

And now the carriage came to the gate, with four lank post-horses, and drivers in waistcoats intended to be seen only in front, and hats that seemed rescued from the rats, just in time to save the crowns.—No favours!—no outriders!—no *éclat*!—scarcely decency—for the string and the knife, so essential to the holding together of harness that seemed to have descended from a nobleman's use to a little gentleman's,—thirdly, to the stables of a great inn, and lastly, to the sheds of a small one, were in requisition, before there could be movement. Lady Lynford was called from the sofa when all was ready—the colonel led her tenderly to the carriage. Miss Wyerley, not quite forgetting her recent mortification, and retaining no desire to be seen, jumped in, without obligation to his hand—they were at the church in a few minutes—and out of it in little more than half an hour :—the clerk had attended at the gate of the

church-yard to do the office of a footman—Mr. Bray's legal relation acted as father to the bride. Mrs. Bray had pleaded her feelings in excuse for her non-attendance; but sent her hopes that Lady Lynford would pass through her house in leaving the church. To be hard-hearted at such a moment would have been to have a will—she complied with the request, and was on her way to 'dear St. Emeril's' before she could persuade herself that she was awake.

The journey, that it might not be fatiguing, was to occupy two days and the morning of the third; and, notwithstanding all the colonel's care to procure for his bride the personal attendance of the mistress of every house at which she stopt, the inconveniencies to which she was put, the comparatively low care of her small quantity of baggage, and the desolation she felt, made this world's luxuries rise rapidly in their market-price, and the prospect of recovering Annette's service, an agreeable contemplation.

The bridegroom professed himself a stranger to the country; but it seemed not to rouse his curiosity—he was thoughtful; and, when he spoke, the effort seemed to call off his mind from some habitual bias. Certainly no bride was ever less flattered in her outset; but still there was nothing to justify complaint, and all would be well at St.

Emeril's, when once the interview with dear Merion was over. Her servants, who had been sent forward from Grosvenor-square, would certainly be on the look-out; and the first certificate she expected of her being near her home, was the jingle of St. Emeril's bells.

'I wish,' said the baroness, 'I wish with all my spirit, this meeting were once over.'

'Do not be alarmed,' said the colonel; 'you have prepared the way—you have sketched the circumstances that led to our proceedings.'

'Yes, indeed; and I have begged him to make allowance for my girlish folly about the picture.'

The colonel repeated the word 'folly' as if derogatory to himself; but she heeded it not: she went on.

'Perhaps I should have done better to treat it seriously, and throw it upon the deception practised on me by the De Quintes—he would, I think, sooner excuse me for pity's sake; for he is a man of great allowance for human nature.—But I own I am terrified at meeting him—you must stand by me:—but, I entreat you, be calm—I cannot bear an angry word, even from *you*, to the dear good old man——'

'I will keep the perfect command of myself, you may rest assured—I always can do it, from

habit.—But you have no cause to think so seriously—he has not yet expressed himself angrily——’

‘No, no, indeed—but, now I come to reflect—I would rather have given him time to write to me again—he owed me two letters when I wrote on Tuesday.’

‘But, after all, what can make this man’s judgment so important to you, my dearest Lady Lynford? You were left perfectly at liberty on being of age, to please yourself in the choice of the man you should marry——’

‘I know his sentiments too well.’

‘But you say he is a mild kind of man, not apt to resent—and what has *he* to resent?’

‘It is his mildness, his gentle temper that terrifies me.—If he were a storming tyrant, he might be angry; and I could be angry too—we might even part in anger; but I should not rest till he had forgiven me—for I love and honour him as a father—and you do not know what he is!’

‘It is pity then—but come, come; *I* shall be angry at this nonsense—to be afraid of an old parson!—be afraid of an old woman; for I know little difference.’

Had her ladyship replied, who shall say what might or might not have ensued?—but she was married—she was setting out as a good wife—she

was prudent, and said no more—her thoughts, however, were not the less unpleasant.

The last of the many stages was now attained :—only eleven miles separated her from the proud home to which she was conveying her favoured captive !—and she endeavoured to fix her attention on the fulness of content which the colonel must feel when he saw to what she introduced him, and on her own still more delightful sensation in realizing all her dreams of generosity. But when the horses were changing for the last time, and she recognised in the inquiries of those around the carriage as to the personages in it, the provincial accent so familiar to her ear—when, finding, by the answers returned, that she was not known, she took comfort, and, in addition to sitting out of sight, drew down the spring-curtain, while the colonel settled with the post-boys.—But the second feeling was that of disgrace—she was proceeding, by stealth, upon a road that should have resounded every step, and amongst people who should have strewed flowers before her.

Again off, she strove to repress her apprehensions, and to smother them under recollections that, on all the evidence of wishes fulfilled, and hopes made certainties, she was now at that which she had deemed the pinnacle of happiness—but her heart was full, and not even her severe reproof

of herself for giving way to a weakness which her husband had condemned—not all her questions, why was she so afraid of her guardian? were of any avail.—She shook from head to foot. The colonel took her cold hand ; and she tried to accept his attentions.

That she was coming must have been known ; therefore she had every reason to suppose she should, as she had done on all previous occasions of the sort, meet her villagers in groupes. Not to disappoint them, she removed the spring-curtain, and sate forward, endeavouring to resume that easy grace for which her deportment was a model and the power of which she well knew, in conciliating all on whom it was exerted. With this external, she tried to put on the lofty character of her mind ; and, determining rather to brave danger than await it, she somewhat peremptorily desired the colonel to give orders for driving to the vicarage.

‘ I *must* see the dear old man,’ said she, ‘ or I shall die of apprehension. It is possible, indeed, that he may be already at the house—but he *may* be at home—I must not offer him a conveyance as I am used to do.—O ! Wanston ! do not be angry with me, if you see me humbled to the ground.—Any thing to be forgiven and reconciled

—for I have—I see I have, used the good old man very ill—I thought I had more courage.’

‘As you please,’ said the colonel, and gave the order.

The bells did not yet ring—no villagers came out.—Nay, the baroness thought she heard the bell toll. She asked her husband if she did not.

He, in return, asked her what she would fancy next;—she bit her lip, and again listened—he then thought her right, and begged her pardon for doubting it.

‘This may account,’ said he, ‘for the stillness of the place—I suppose people, even here, *do* sometimes die; and you may depend on it, if there is a funeral, every one is too much occupied to think of *us*—it is the holyday of the vulgar.’

‘It may be so—but I do not like it.’

‘What? do you think it ominous? I hope,’ said he smiling, ‘you are not superstitious—I should not like a wife that saw winding-sheets in candles, and coffins in cinders.’

They were now close to the church—a sharp turn brought them to the front of the vicarage-house.

The windows were all closed!

A space of time which the baroness reckoned by hours instead of minutes, elapsed, before the re-

peated ringing of the bell brought any one forward. At length, bolts were drawn back, and the lock was turned, and the house-door was opened a hand's breadth, and the vicar's ancient man-servant showed half his pale face—not coming forward, as he was wont to do, along the walk to open the little wicket, with his 'Yes, my lady,' and 'No, my lady,' and 'Thank God, my lady.'

She had not yet spoken—she had scarcely breathed—she had only looked at the colonel—but with such a look!—*he* tried to look at ease.

'William!' said she, almost screaming,—
'what, what is the matter?'

'Matter?' he repeated—'O! don't, don't come here, my lady.'—He shook his head, paused a moment, and shut the door again.

An old female was passing. She stopped when she came up to the carriage, and, curtsying low, said, 'Ah! my lady, you are come at last—he's gone; and if ever there was a good man, he was one.'

'To the house'—was all Lady Lynford could say, before she sunk on the colonel's shoulder.

The carriage wound slowly up the circuitous road that broke the steepness of the ascent. She was taken out of the carriage insensible. Annette, whose attendance her men-servants from town had been ordered to bespeak, was in readiness with the

housekeeper to receive her: others of the domestics were soon collected, and she was laid on the nearest bed: her recovery was to a state of distressing agony; but even this was something gained.

Medical assistance was procured in about half an hour, during which time of waiting, Colonel Wanston had remained in a state of unquiet restraint, the most awkward and mortifying. His claims were so far from made good to the servants, that they eyed him with suspicious inquisitiveness, as if expecting him to give an account of himself, and put him aside with little ceremony, in passing through the room into which he had retreated, to that of their lady. His groom and valet were not yet arrived: he knew not a step of his way about the house; consequently, for fear of making some distressing mistake, he must stay where he was; for, unless Lady Lynford had asked for him, no one of those about her would have introduced the strange gentleman to her. He had therefore rather a subordinate rank in the cast of parts in his wife's drama; and the servants, who had, at least, the advantage of knowing their way, showed very little inclination to divide their attention between their lady and him.

When the apothecary arrived, the baroness had been relieved by tears, and had her perfect

recollection. Putting aside all prefatory expressions, and all circumlocution that was merely to spare her feelings, she demanded to be told what had preceded the death of her friend, and heard, that soon after her quitting St. Emeril's, Mr. Meryon had been observed to droop and lose flesh—that he had not been like himself—that his quiet habits of study had left him, and that he had become restless and uneasy—always hankering for news from London, and making his daily inquiries at the post-office for letters :—fever had come on, and reduced him very low. Whatever ailed or distressed him, he had assiduously concealed from the females of his family; and even when his indisposition was evident, he had forbidden Mrs. Holby's communicating it to her ladyship, as he then was expecting her return. The fever had not increased alarmingly, till two days before his death, when having himself fetched his letters, and made some exertion in writing, for which he had shut himself up, neither eating nor drinking till he had finished, he was seized with faintness, and had expired.

‘Then *I* have been the cause of his death,’ said Lady Lynford, in the deepest tone of melancholy—‘I have been the death of the best man that ever lived.’

‘No, no—not so, my lady’—said the apothecary—‘The old gentleman’s constitution was never strong, and it had been some time giving way—your absence could not be helped.’

‘O! no, no’—said she—‘do not talk to me—I know what I mean and say—I know what it was,—but tell me, had he every care taken of him?—did you attend him?—was all done that could be done?’

Of course, the answer returned was of the most consolatory kind, and she had the additional comfort of hearing that Mrs. Holby and her daughter had not been wanting in assiduity.

CHAPTER III.

IF any one in such a country as England, could feel as if on a desert island—if ever any one so rich, could feel in the most abject destitution—if any one highly ennobled, could feel of the lowest class of the miserable, it was the bride of Colonel Wanstons. Without the common consolation of the unhappy, that their lot is the decree of Him who never fails to temper his chastisements with mercy—without the satisfaction of feeling that her own conduct had not contributed to her distress; and almost perversely inclined to draw down guilt upon her head to aggravate intolerable suffering, she seemed to place her resource in keeping up the stormy perturbation of her mind, and to court the excess of agony that it might at once overwhelm her.

Yet now, what great cause had her ladyship to complain of her lot? Excepting the often-undervalued friendship and the existence of Mr. Meryon, she had every thing that she had ever possessed, or that she wished to possess.—She had carved for herself; and her palate had been indulged. She would have thought herself very

cruelly and unjustifiably treated, had she been prohibited from marrying the man to whom, she was convinced, or, at least, fancied, she was attached beyond the power of this world's control. Had she asked her guardian's consent, while a minor, and it had been refused, on the only plea of which she could form an expectation, inequality, what would she have done?—Why, she would have waited till the fourth of August; and she then would have done as she had done, but perhaps in a manner rather more becoming her rank;—and if Mr. Meryon had resented her conduct towards him, she would have resented his resentment; and again she might have tossed her head and bridled in her horse's, as she had formerly done, when she knew not what she was doing: But now that he was gone, he was invaluable; and when she had run a most ungrateful risque, against which her own understanding might have warned her, the event came upon her, as if she had *not* laid the train for it.—She had stifled the cries of conscience—she had deafened her judgment—she had hoodwinked her sagacity—a precipice was before her; but there was a toy at the bottom of it—and she had ventured.

Rendered utterly powerless, at a time when nothing could be done but by her orders, she was obliged to collect her ideas, and, in the first place,

to execute for herself an office now become doubly painful, in introducing the master of the house to her household. Annette was here of great use—she gave the pitch of reception to the lower personages, and talked of the colonel, whose name she could with difficulty pronounce, as of the early object of her lady's affections—a secret 'with which she had been alone intrusted!'—When Lady Lynford, with her hand before her eyes, had said to her, 'You remember the miniature-picture—it was of the colonel when a boy'—she had said enough to procure him Annette's lowest obeisance; and, as every thing in their new master's exterior, was prepossessing, or, at least, *imposing*, there was nothing to overcome, unless some disappointment in his being of no higher distinction.—Her ladyship desired that every attention might be paid him while she was obliged to take care of herself; and having thus considered his comfort, she requested him to come to her.

It was more the suggestion of what was fit, than the indulgence of what was pleasant, which she obeyed—such a change can the flash of a momentary conviction produce in the prospect of the heedless!—The agitated pendulum of her feelings swung in too great a range to abate quickly into any point near a centre—it still sought the extreme; and now the beloved colonel, and all the

world added to his weight, would have been found wanting, if balanced against the life and recovered favour of her deceased guardian.

This state of mind could not last. Colonel Wanston obeyed her summons—he was tender and consoling ; but her natural spirit, bruised but not extinct, would not accept his consolation. For some moments, she felt angry with him as with the cause of her suffering ; and then, angry with herself for the injustice of her resentment, she begged his patience and excused away her pertinacity. ‘I have now,’ said she, ‘no one to rely on but you—you must be every thing to me—you must let me talk about dear Meryon, and join with me in respect for him—I shall do every thing in my power, to show how much I respected him.’

The colonel did not either smile or sneer at this resolution to do right, when the opportunity was past. He was either too much interested in what had taken place, or he knew the world too well, to raise great expectations from it, or to quarrel with its failures. There was no want of kindness in his manner : he begged her to consult her own ease, and to give him her commands, assuring her that ‘he should ask no consideration for himself, till he saw her mind restored to peace, as he hoped it soon would be, by reflection that her suffering could avail nothing.’

She was watched through the night, and her endeavour to resign herself to a punishment which she felt she deserved, did more towards the alleviation of her sorrow, than medicine had done towards procuring her rest.

Her appearance at the breakfast-table commanded respect. She was the image of penitence:—yet, not forgetting what was due to the colonel, she had chastised her grief into a melancholy so tender, as in some measure to atone for this eclipse of happiness. Her husband was making little movements of accommodation for her, guided by the report he had received of the state in which he must expect to see her—and in the eyes of the once-exacting Lady Heraline Beltravers, but now-abased Baroness Lynford, the attention of placing her sofa and beating up the cushions to support her, was become a favour, nay, a charity, demanding grateful acknowledgment. Some influence, indeed, might be allowed to Colonel Wanston's situation and pretensions—Cupid was still the companion of Hymen; and there was, in a fine military figure accompanied by manners of no subordinate class, something that rendered domestic assiduities acts of condescension—at least to a pre-disposed judgment. With pleasure, she saw his orders obeyed by the men-servants, who were preparing the breakfast-table, with that respectful

alacrity, which she never suffered to be relaxed towards herself : every trifle that did not add to her misery, was accepted as comfort—a bankrupt in squandered happiness, shillings were now risen to pounds in nominal valuation.

Her husband tried kindly to cheer her. He was very agreeably officious, and adroit in his arrangements, and politely expressed his obligations to a profession that occasionally taught handiness in small things.—He then drew her attention to himself as her nearest friend. He spoke in gratifying terms on the honour she had conferred on him, and the distinguished property she had allowed him to share : he tried what praising the views and the grounds would do ; but this was a note out of tune.—She could only answer, ‘ How well I remember the moment when I quitted him ! ’

The apothecary repeated his visit. She would take no medicine—and the expression of her countenance was not the most flattering to his judgment when he prescribed ‘ quiet.’—‘ Send *that*,’ said she, in her deepest tone—‘ and I will gladly swallow it.’—He was going to smile—but—he looked again, and took a silent leave.

Requesting to be sent for, if she wished for his presence, the new master of St. Emeril’s Court took a more extensive survey of his possessions

than the space before breakfast had allowed : he visited the stables, the gardens, the farm, and made himself acquainted with the state of the game. His own servants, his gig and horses were arrived, and he had no reason to suppose himself injured by the answers which the abundant interrogations they must have undergone, had brought out. All was yet well.

The advice given to the baroness to remain quiet, had no authority over the perturbation of her feelings. She wished to see Mrs. Holby, that she might learn all the particulars she could relate, of Mr. Meryon's illness and death ; and for her gratification in this point, she sent a civil request to her to come to her, and added to the civility, by sending her carriage to fetch her. But in a long conference, she learnt little more than she had already heard. No part of Mr. Meryon's anxiety had escaped his conscientious lips ; and the baroness's informant had the bad taste to express her surprise, that ' she had never been intrusted with the pleasure in store for her ladyship's neighbours, in seeing her return so agreeably married. The colonel, she heard every body say, was a very fine man, a very charming man.'

Lady Lynford looked up, as if to assure herself that Miss Wyerley had not imposed herself on her for the widow Holby : she had no cause

for this apprehension : the character is not so uncommon as to reduce the species to one.—She drew the conversation back to her purpose, and heard that a nephew of Mr. Meryon's was then in the house, to whom he had bequeathed his property. His writing-table was sealed by his own hand, and the key of it she was to deliver to her ladyship, to whom its contents were left.

A fresh gush of affliction followed the receipt of the key ; and the sufferer was only the more unhappy for what she had heard. The widow Holby's sympathy seemed to her ' the last grain of sand, requisite to complete the weight under which she was to sink ; but having no inclination to yield to *her*, she, without profuse civility, dismissed her : the good lady looked disappointed—did she expect to be coaxed to remain?—perhaps she might ; for she had arrayed herself with some care.

The baroness had again obtained the liberty of thinking, without other disturbance than that which she herself contributed to her grief ; but however valuable this liberation, she could not make advantage of it. To indulge in thought, thought must assume a gentle aspect. She soon called Annette, who sate waiting her orders in the ante-room, and condescended to bewail herself to her.

The Frenchwoman's sagacity had not deserted

her. She had presently made it clear to herself, that her lady's marriage must have been, as far as respected her guardian, clandestine; and now she could not doubt that the sense of this, bore a large share in her unbounded sorrow—a few adroit words brought Lady Lynford to something little short of confessing the fact, and put it within the orbit of Annette's ministry, to suggest consolation, in her security from any displeasure that she might have feared.—This not succeeding, the assiduous *soubrette* was driven to the expedient of calling off her lady's thoughts from herself, by speaking of her own disappointment in marriage; and in this recital, she was permitted, without blame or observation, to congratulate herself on having acted in opposition to the deceased vicar's advice, when he urged the prudence of her not relying merely on the forms of her own church, which could not bind the man whom she meant for her husband. The unprincipled creature, on the contrary, rejoiced in having left him the power of deserting her—he had used it to her great satisfaction; and she was to be considered again as Annette, and quite ready to spend the rest of her life with 'her dear charming lady.'

The four first days of the return to St. Emeril's, produced little improvement in its mistress's peace

of mind. She removed from her bed, where she got little rest, to her couch, where she passed the day unemployed, not excluding the colonel, but not able to bear conversation.—On the fifth day, he prevailed on her to quit the room which she had chosen to sit in, and to betake herself to one adjoining it, which had a different aspect and view, and which removed her from the sight of the church. She submitted, and, in gratitude for his care, tried to make more exertion. He had left her between two and three o'clock; and her maid being at that time engaged at dinner, she was disposed to rise and move—she went into a room some way off that in which she had been left: the windows were open, the day was fine, the heat was moderate, and she felt the balmy influence of the breezes. She looked, with reviving sensations, on the beauty of the scene, and, for the first time, was sensible to the pleasure of returning to it. It appeared unusually lively; for it was peopled beyond its accustomed mediocrity of population. Her long sight discerned persons running down the sides of the hills, as if they had left their work to gratify their curiosity—hers was consequently awakened; and she strained her eyes for some moments, to the deafening of her sense of hearing, or she would, much earlier than she did, have heard the slow rising of the tolling bell,

which, as if it was conscious of her approach, informed her of the obsequies of him for whom she was so justly mourning.

She was no coward, even in despair—she did not fly, or attempt to shun the awful conviction:—she rose from the seat she had taken, as if she could not sit in the presence of her own ideas; and she stood, firm as a petrification, and scarcely less cold, whilst she saw what was obtruded on her sight, the body of the venerable man borne to its last repose.—She gazed till all was past—without intending to kneel, she dropt on her knees:—her limbs still further failed her; and she sunk on the ground—no tears relieved her—her feelings were too intense to relax—she raised herself, and sate on the carpet.—She looked at herself—her white dress dazzled her sight—a wish for black crossed her mind—but she had no mourning.—Alas! the desolation of such greatness!

Her servants had sought her with anxiety and in alarm—they found her sitting, in apparent vacuity of thought.—That she had seen what they wished her not to see, was clear to them; and they began lamenting the unfortunate change of place.

Dismissing one of the women to desire the colonel to wait for her in the room she had quitted, she gave orders to Annette to purchase

for her, any materials that the village afforded for mourning, and to take care, that, whatever the activity or assistance required, she might be so dressed when she rose the next morning—in the mean time, commissions more suited to her accustomed style, were to be despatched, and having given her commands firmly, she went into the room, where she expected to find the colonel—she was disappointed—he was not there.

In sullen sadness, she preferred an indignant waiting to a prompt inquiry. Taking all misery to herself, the spirit of dejection turned into perverseness—she affected to imagine that neglect on the part of the man for whom she had been the author of so much evil, was to be her punishment. In triumph over her natural feeling, she said to herself, ‘ Well, let it be so—I merit it—“ our pleasant vices—the instruments to plague and punish us !” —I believe I would rather it were so—I *must* hate him—therefore I may as well hate him for neglect, as for what has occurred—we part perhaps—and here am I buried—a deserted thing !—Be it so—I would rather have my cup brim-full of misery—half a draught is only half-killing !’

After waiting near an hour, the door opened, and the colonel entered—she was almost ferocious ; —words the least of all conciliating, were on her

tongue—but her own eye disarmed her—he was in the deepest mourning; and his hat, which was in his hand, showed that he had paid, with his first, his last respect to her friend—she was unnerved—the tenderness of acknowledgment subdued every other emotion—she recognised a fellow-sufferer, and with tears that scalded as they fell upon her hands, she one moment thanked, and the next upbraided him. He bore with her—he soothed her—he tried to win her to accept the idea of future happiness; but she was exhausted, and could scarcely listen.

But this artificial aggravation subsided, and in a few days she was evidently recovering, first to composure, and then to a placid sobriety of thought that was an approach to cheerfulness; she began to coax herself with the anchorage her heart might yet find in her new connexion—‘she should *not* be deserted’—‘she could *not* be forlorn.’—She thought that ‘even the dear good old man would, had he known the colonel, have thought her at least *safely* disposed of—it was not a great, but it was a substantial connexion.’

The visit to the vicarage-house, which she meant to make in person, rather pressed, as Mr. Meryon’s nephew was very pardonably impatient to remove his property, and her claim to the contents of the writing-table was an impediment. She

therefore made it her first business, when she could leave the house. Summoning all her fortitude, and taking Colonel Wanston with her, she drove to the gate, and remained in the carriage while the writing-table was removed into the hall for her convenience. To go into the room where it stood, and where she was accustomed to see 'dear Mer-ryon,' was unnecessary and imprudent.—The colonel handed her out of the carriage, and led her into the hall, remaining close to her. The papers could be contained in her handkerchief, and Mrs. Holby stood ready to be noticed; but to this condescension the baroness was not inclined. The poor woman, not very agreeable indeed in herself to a personage of the baroness's description, however well-intentioned, could do nothing that did not increase the dislike her ladyship had unfortunately conceived against her.—She was however permitted to tie the four corners of the handkerchief containing the papers; and this painful business despatched, Lady Lynford returned home, under the soothings of her husband.

CHAPTER IV.

A VERY prudent request from Colonel Wanston, that she would defer the examination of the papers till the emotion consequent on fetching them had subsided, was, without reluctance, complied with; and now beginning to feel a wish to recover, she gained ground daily. She saw no company; but she drove out; and, more in appearance a widow than a bride, she was looked on with an indefinite sort of compassion by all who saw her. The novel comfort of this imperfect peace, made her very unwilling to disturb it; and thinking every morning when she rose, that she *would* look over the papers, and every night when she went to bed, that she *ought* to have done it, she procrastinated till she feared that the omission might occasion some neglect. She then appointed a morning for the business; and the next consideration was to be the disposal of the living of St. Emeril. In the mean time, farther improvements in comfort were made. Lady Lynford again felt proud of her choice; and for the opinion of those around her, she cared little.

The morning of examination came. She

thought herself equal to any trial, and ordered her carriage, to go a few miles from home, as soon as she supposed she should have finished her task, which she could not but wish over.

The handkerchief, as it had been tied up by its four corners by the assiduous hands of Mrs. Holby, was placed on the table; and the colonel having seen her thus to the threshold of grief, would, in delicacy, have retired, as a stranger to her most intimate concerns.—She bade him stay with her, and gave him a small box to open, and to present its contents to her.—It was filled with memorials of tender recollection—a lock of her own hair, begged at parting—the hand-writing, the rings of friends—things of ideal value, made doubly precious by appreciation! She herself laid hold on a pretty case for letters which she had purchased in town, and sent to ‘the dear old man,’ as her first proof of remembrance in absence—it was full; and her own letters met her eye, commented on with his pencil, in a way which proved, that however she had deceived herself, she had never succeeded in deceiving him. In the vacant space left by the brevity of her detail of Lord Winchmore’s visit and proposal, he had written ‘She will repent this girlish precipitancy’—and on the outside of that which announced her marriage, was inscribed, in far less steady characters, ‘We shall meet, I

hope—in Heaven—my dearest child.—Be good, even if you suffer——’

These things, though they brought painful recollections, had their counterpoise.—The colonel had a very fair opportunity, which he did not pass unused, of assuring her that, as far as depended on himself, she should not verify the prediction of repentance; and the more melancholy motto was ascribable to the low spirits attendant on fatal disease. She could, in *these* cases, strive to be at peace.

The next packet was less appalling. It was a letter directed to Mr. Meryon in her father’s hand-writing—it had been opened and sealed again. She could have no apprehension of the contents of *this* epistle—it was one of the many which her father had written to him on business; but she supposed it of some importance, by its being re-sealed—she was going to lay it aside, as fit to be placed with her title-deeds; but on a second thought, she opened it, and found it merely explanatory of her father’s will.—The most important part of it was this:

‘ I will reveal to you now, in perfect confidence, the real cause of my prohibition of Hera-line’s marrying a foreigner; or, as I have more cautiously worded the prohibition, “ any one not born within the four seas.” She will trace it up

to my dislike of the De Quintes ; and this is sufficient to satisfy her ; but it is only against one person that I wish to protest ; and to gain your assistance in enforcing this prohibition, I must enter into particulars too unpleasant to communicate verbally. In my second going abroad, I contracted a friendship with a man whose talents were not only agreeable, but useful to me.—He was an Englishman, but I found him in Paris ; and he led me into situations and circumstances there, which I cannot detail even to you.—They involved us both ; and we should have been in the Bastille, had we not separated and got out of the country. We met again at Rome, where he had, before I joined him, married a very pretty Irish girl. He soon began to use her ill, and I stood her friend. He then grew jealous of me, but without the smallest cause ; for her conduct was perfectly prudent. She had a son ; and because I could not let the poor creature want for the necessaries of life, when he would not furnish them, he was sometimes in a rage that endangered her. She privately let me know that she wished herself and her child in Ireland with her friends ; and I contrived to send her to England in her way. I came home myself soon after, and found her in London, but preparing to quit it. As a last favour, being herself a Protestant, she requested me to suffer

her child, who had been named after the Catholic form at Rome, to be re-baptized and named after me. This was done at St. George's; and I stood god-father for him. After this, she gave up all thoughts of going to Ireland: her friends then supported her, and I professed myself ready to meet any expense for the benefit of the boy.— This she construed too literally, and became very encroaching. I had furnished her with the means of putting him to school, and supposed she would bring him up in some subordinate rank of life; but she was of some family herself; and her ambition was to put him in the army. She expected me to procure him a commission, or to pay for one; but I was tired out, and refused. To secure myself against the husband, and not entirely without suspicion of collusion between him and his wife, I never saw her or the boy after the christening; and when she wanted to work on me, in the affair of the commission, to recommend him to my favour, she sent me a miniature-picture of him done by herself, with a hint that my not receiving it, or my discarding it, might have very unpleasant consequences to myself. This convinced me that there was some understanding between her and her husband, who had then got back to Paris, and this was confirmed to me, by her betaking herself again to him. To my great

relief, the fellow died, and she did not long survive him. The lad, who, if the portrait resembled him, must have been very handsome, has got on in the army; and I should have thought no more of them, had it not been for the deception practised on my daughter by the De Quintes, in which, you may remember, a miniature-picture from my cabinet was used. I was a little alarmed to find that this portrait had made something like an impression on Heraline's heart; and it has often made me uneasy, when I have fancied that the impression was not eradicated.

‘The name of these people is Wanston; and I find he has distinguished himself in the army, and is in very good society in London. Now, I need not tell you, that I would rather have my estates go to my heir-at-law, than to this fellow; and if, by chance, Heraline and he should meet, she should discover him to be the original from whom the miniature she was so much in love with, was painted, and, as she certainly might command a man in his situation, she should form a design of marrying him, I cannot tell you the distress it would occasion me. I therefore confide to you these particulars, with which I do not wish her to be intrusted, at least, till she is of age. I have made your consent necessary to her marrying while she is a minor; therefore, if you hear

any thing of this Wanston, you know what you have to do. As to any other person, not expressly born as I have stated, you may use your discretion.'

It is the deficiency of verbal and even of graphic description, to convey some resemblances, that gives to the histrionic art its superiority.—We cannot write contortions of countenance—we cannot paint a shudder—who could, by any mean, portray Lady Lynford at this moment?

She had commenced the perusal of this letter with very little interest, leaning back in her chair, and had proceeded some way, with sufficient possession of mind to desire the colonel to shut out the sun when it incommoded her—she had, *sotto voce*, commented to herself on the proneness of her father to be duped; and she expected to find herself confirmed in the opinion that his ill experience of foreigners in general, had given rise to a prohibition now of no importance to her:—but the son born in Rome—the commission—the miniature—and then the name—came on in rapid succession;—her own silent reading thundered on her ear—she rose—turned away—pressed her hand on her heart, and then dropping the letter on the ground, she stood with her arms extended, and

looking down on it as it lay, as if she expected the ground to open and swallow it and her.

Her husband, pale as the paper, yet retained his habit of attention to her—he advanced, picked up the letter, and would have placed her on the sofa; but she was fixed in immovable rigidity of joints and muscles—it must have been force that had detached her from the spot where she seemed rooted.—He tried persuasion—she returned his requesting look with a tremendous frown;—and when she apprehended the exertion of his superior strength to remove her, she stamped on the ground, and repelled him, staggering to the other side of the apartment:—then looking at him over her shoulder, her fine mouth distorted with contempt, she uttered the words ‘base—treachery.’

He fired—his eyes flashed—she hooted out—‘Keep off—do not touch me’—then stalking to the door, she turned, and perceiving him near her, murmured in a deep tone—‘Treachery!—You Italian!—where were you born?—I can tell you—not within the four seas.’

She then indignantly retreated out of the room, and, pulling the door after her, as if she meant to bury herself in the ruins of her mansion, she locked herself into her chamber, and remained there, thrown on her bed, without food or sleep, till the same time the next day, neither her hus-

band nor her servants being able to gain admission.

Oppressed by the heat of the next noon, she rose to relieve herself from the feeling of suffocation; and in striving to reach the window, she saw a folded paper lying on the carpet, which appeared to have been put under the door: it was directed to her in the colonel's hand-writing, and contained these words:—

‘I have, as you may suppose, read the letter, and am not at all averse to meeting whatever charge against me its tenour can imply.—I own I have not acted in ignorance of the predicament in which you were placed, but I see no cause for your estranging yourself from me. Unless it is your pleasure to betray this infringement of an unpublished law, we have nothing to apprehend. If, indeed, I have incurred your displeasure, I can say nothing; I can only profess myself ready to yield to it, and retreat to the situation from which you have called me.

‘Should you choose to adopt a middle course between secrecy and our separation,—and, admitting the force of this unjust prohibition, still think proper to live as my wife, I trust, I can convince you that your great inheritance is not necessary to secure my conduct. My situation and views in life, are not such as to make immense riches my

right, or a moderate income beneath my attention. With the lowest dower that is allotted you, you shall find me what you have hitherto seen me—a man of honour, and not ungrateful for your partiality. Inform me of your pleasure.—Admit me to speak to you ; and I can, I am persuaded, unless you are resolved to hate me, remove the greatest part of your apprehensions. At the same time, allow me to say, that the accidental circumstance of my birth, of which your father has so cruelly availed himself, does not affect my principles, or induce me to think myself less an Englishman, or less entitled to retain the estimation which I have gained in my profession. Reproaches I cannot, will not endure—for none do I deserve : had I acted otherwise than I have done, you would have cause to reproach me : I have adopted the most prudent circumspection, as I can convince you, if you will hear me.—I wait your reply with impatience.’

The answer returned was a request to have the letter restored to her. It was inclosed and sent to her. She read it, as if hoping that she had construed it too rigidly, or that it might have abated of its severity ; but it was as merciless to her precipitation at the second as at the first reading.—With it, she received a paper which had hitherto escaped her notice, in Mr. Meryon’s hand-writing,

commenting on this posthumous communication. As if for his own acquittal, in case of such an accident as had occurred, he observed on the very dangerous responsibility imposed on him, shackled with this secrecy which disarmed him of all power to prevent the mischief. He stated his chief reliance to be on the caution with which he hoped to be able to impress her mind, and on what he thought the integrity and frankness of her nature. He professed himself willing to do all in his power ; but, in case of his being himself deceived, he protested against the inadequacy of the means afforded him to prevent it.

The confusion of her mind, under the exhaustion into which she had suffered herself to sink, was made almost delirium by this call on her power of thinking.—She could scarcely believe the reality of that which had overwhelmed her. Her caution, however, did not desert her. She had admitted Annette, in order to send to the colonel ; and now, telling her that she had been distressed by looking over Mr. Meryon's papers, she submitted to take food and to change her clothes,—her consoling waiting-woman, while she was attending her, advising her ‘ not to look over any more papers, but to go and sit with the colonel, who had been in despair about her.’

A reply to this counsel was not necessary ;—

had it been attempted, it might have appeared in a very wild form ; for certainly she was more likely to say any thing unintelligible, than that she would go and sit with the colonel. To avoid being teased, she held out hopes of compliance ; and, by this, having procured release from the presence of her servant, she had leisure to think on the many various points that claimed her attention, the most prominent of which were the tremendous danger she had incurred—the means used to draw her into it—and the degree of exculpation she could establish for herself—for not even the natural concern of self-preservation had, at present, suggested any thing towards escape.

The first of these subjects required only a plain statement, to say all it could. She might, as soon as the affair got currency of report, expect, if she chose to wait for it, a legal ejectment from her estates and her dwelling ; and for this she must, if possible, prepare herself—the second rumination carried her thoughts back to Grosvenor-square, and to persons whom nothing could have made other than odious to her, save her predilection.—She ran over in her thoughts, all the actors in the drama who could be privy to its machinery, and the number of possibilities against her, dismayed her.—In her own exculpation, her strongest plea was the security she had extracted from the

register of Colonel Wanston's baptism. She did not then know—and, indeed, she might be excused if she did not *suppose*, that any thing, on which so much occasionally depends, could be so ill-contrived as a parish-register.

Nothing could now be more precarious than the colonel's situation in her opinion. He had been one in a conspiracy—and that it was not hostile to her inclination, was little excuse when it was so injurious to her most important interests.—She could, without the smallest palliation, hate and detest Lady Drumcannon, her dependant, and the little priest who had done her the ill office of completing her happiness. There was some suspension of condemnation for Mrs. Parr, till her share in the business was explained: the very low rate at which the baroness was accustomed to assess the poor woman's intellectual capacity, interposed the bare possibility that she too might have been a dupe—but this was comparatively of small consequence.—What was she to think of her husband?—Why, certainly, that he had been lured by the greatness of the prize, to deceive her, in a way that threw all the penalty on her, and, as this very letter told her, still made gain for himself. However cautious in promoting his own plan—however passive he had remained while he suffered things to take their course, his deception was the

same ; and he could be entitled to no credit :—his pretensions to honour were hollow—such a transaction would have ruined a banker, a merchant, nay, any one of her lowest tradesmen ; and no reason could be assigned why, because he was of a profession that was inconsistent with such a breach of integrity, he should be acquitted of guilt when he was guilty in fact. This being the *ultimatum* of her decision, she felt no disposition to yield to his wish for a conference.

CHAPTER V.

BUT the colonel and his lady had now been married full three weeks ; and the time had been favourable to him, in affording opportunities of acquaintance with the habits of her mind ; and, on the experience thus furnished, he conducted his movements, when sending Annette to inform his lady of his approach, he, with the interval of a very few seconds, followed her steps, and presented himself, before the baroness could decide on refusing or accepting his visit.

All the theories in the world are not equal to a small portion of common experience—a truth of which Lady Lynford might have felt convinced, if she could have made leisure to think, when she saw Colonel Wanston coming towards her, and when her sensations were so very different from those which had governed her before he entered. The style of life in which she had been systematically reared, had afforded her little opportunity of knowing the world as it really exists ; and of intercourse with men, she knew nothing more than the homage which her rank, her wealth, her person, and manners, obtained from them. Her

father and Mr. Meryon were the only two who did not come into the class of homagers—to the one, she belonged by natural right—to the other, by deputation—but from all others, she expected, and in general received, as circumstances admitted, this tribute of intoxicating submission. From her husband, she looked for it; and, though she intended to make it easy and voluntary, she did not mean the less punctually to levy it. Her power of inducing was so supported by that of enforcing!—she could, when she had attracted by the gentler graces, so subdue by the great features of her character!—in short, she was, and had found herself, so irresistible, that she had never calculated on the possibility of being decidedly governed. Therefore, when her husband entered the room with a grave determined look, and ordering Annette out of it, locked the door, and took his seat close to that on which his wife had sunk, she was in a situation not only new to her, but appalling, under the defenceless feeling of indefinite danger which accompanied it.

Perhaps fearing that, if he proceeded too violently, he might incapacitate her from listening and replying to him, he softened his look and his manner, when he began to demand a discussion of the circumstances in which they found themselves. She could then a little neutralize her

fermenting passions, and suffer him, at least without interruption, to state to her the options which he had to offer her. He wished to induce her to keep secret what she had discovered, and to trust to his judgment for her feeling of security. He almost claimed her thanks for the circumspection with which he had acted; and he had recapitulated the points in their favour. Lady Drummannon was dead—Miss Wyerley was in a situation, and of a nature, which would make her secrecy an easy purchase.—Mrs. Bray had been, indeed, informed of the risque incurred, but not till receding was impossible—she had been, without difficulty, induced to think lightly of it; and Lady Lynford could have no fear of *her*—her husband's interest was too nearly connected with the matter, to leave him at liberty to be mischievous; and these persons formed the whole of the formidable corps. He had omitted nothing that could render the proof of the marriage difficult. The place was sufficiently obscure—no crowd had been attracted by show—Mr. Bray's relation was under command—the clerk of the parish was almost superannuated; and she might remember that she had been complimented with the first entry in a new volume of the register. He had made every inquiry as to the situation of her heir-at-law, and nothing could be more favourable to her: the *onus* of proving that

which he could not possibly prove, unless they themselves put it in his power, was thrown on him:—he must prove a negative—he must get rid of the strong evidence of a register of baptism, which implied birth, and he must be able to substitute some other for it.—In short, he concluded, they had only to be silent to be safe and happy—and he should, for himself, have not a moment's anxiety.—He wished for her concurrence, and would not doubt that she could give it; —he expected it—he had a right to demand it—it was in his power to insist on it—he would not talk of her *duty* to him—he trusted she knew it and would act accordingly.'

A shudder was the only reply ready for him—she could not be insensible to the accumulated danger of such a proceeding.—Misfortune is a quick teacher; and now, in a moment, the inexperienced baroness saw the moral turpitude of such persistence in deception, and the aggravated evil that might ensue, should they, at some future time, be called to account for the use of that which they had forfeited.

She therefore could not concur: but beginning to feel the domination which she had courted to accept her liberty, she did not clamorously reject the proposed plan—she only, and very temperately, declared her want of confidence in its ul-

timate event, but in a way, it must be confessed, amounting to a refusal.

No surprise was indicated in her husband's manner of receiving this check: but he seemed to have calculated his next move on the probability of its occurrence: he drew his chair before her: he stooped to look into her eyes, and grasping her arm, he said, 'Then now, Lady Lynford, you shall have an option. Act, if you please, up to your romantic notions of justice, or yield to your weak fear—for the event will be the same—and then, when you have stripped yourself of what you might have retained in just opposition to causeless cruelty—hear what you *must do*. We shall not starve—my income and yours will maintain us—and as the wife of a colonel in the British army, you can never feel disgraced;—but remember *this*—I will not have notice drawn upon me—I will not be pointed at, as I walk the streets, as 'the man who married the baroness Lynford under a deception—our own endeavours must accelerate the oblivion of this circumstance, and nothing can more contribute to this, than your suffering yourself to be described only as my wife. We must appear as Colonel and Mrs. Wanston; for I assure you, my vanity will not be at all gratified by your title, when I have not the means of supporting it.'

She was staggered—‘ Surely,’ said she, ‘ you would get honour from its being known that you had voluntarily made this renunciation.’

He ridiculed this ‘ speculative virtue,’ as he called it ; and a long conference, in which no sensitive part of her mind escaped the probe, ended in her submission, against her judgment, to that which at present made a sad inroad on her integrity, and threatened in future to be no less hostile to her peace. She, who had so early and loudly asserted her independence, who had challenged her right to be considered—she, who was to give the law to the man to whom she gave her hand—she, who would have chosen a husband more by his power of gracing her triumph, than with any consideration of the relative duties to which she pledged herself ;—she, who was all taunt, all sarcasm, when presumption stimulated her to unsheathe the weapons of her wit, was now induced, by the attack made on her pride, to connive at falsehood, to submit to conscious dishonour, and to become a partaker in a nefarious concealment.

Her ladyship was recompensed immediately for this sacrifice to—to what ?—to conjugal duty, shall we say ? or to pride ?—No matter—the colonel, by nature or habit a grave, thinking man, and, to do him justice, not at all likely to spoil a wife by weak fondness, was liberal of his acknow-

ledgments ; and she was again settled, in her own hopes, the lady of St. Emeril's. Willing to believe what was so consentaneous to her wishes, and so vitally necessary to her happiness, she imposed, even on herself, by the ostensible pretext of reliance on her husband's judgment, when her own spoke in very contrary accents. It was not her custom to surrender her opinion while she thought she could support it—but times, or circumstances, were altered—she told herself she was married.

A few days, in some measure, wore off the unpleasant recollection of what had distressed her : the accusing papers were all committed to the fire ; and there seemed nothing to hinder the new-married couple from entering fully into those pleasures which their own great means allowed them to offer, and the neighbourhood might accept and repay. Calls had been made by every family entitled to be on visiting-terms ; and though Lady Lynford's grief and her husband's attention to her, had hitherto been an excuse for not returning them, she was now disposed to think it time to come forward. But when she proposed it, Colonel Wanston started an objection which she received as a peculiar mark of respectful regard to her deceased friend. ' Let us,' said he, ' put off our visits till we can put off our mourning—till

your spirits enable you to make your appearance at church, I think we had better be quiet.'

There was a double satisfaction in this suggestion—nay, perhaps there was a third to be added to it, if the indulgence of an indescribable feeling of reluctance in the baroness, to do what she had proposed, may be admitted into the number. Her visit to the metropolis for the purpose of introduction, had, by various accidents, so failed of its intention, that it might have been remarked of her, that it had made her shy. If, before it, any one had mistaken her deportment as touched with this infirmity, it must have been resolved into unqualified pride—perhaps it was not less pride now ; but it was qualified with some of those lowly feelings from which the humble are safe—degradation, mortification, and disgrace, which she was unwilling to submit to the judgment even of the shop-keepers in the little high-street of her village.

Under the present restraint of her half-formed intention, she therefore felt at least a respite ; and it was too acceptable to suggest to her, a comparison of it with the former obstacle placed in the way of her going to court. The colonel had always excellent good reasons for whatever he did : he was no heedless boy : he was at a mature period of life, never acted without consideration, or

spoke without previous thought. In the former instance, his advice had been far less palatable than in this : she had not always entirely felt able to admit his reasoning about courts and drawing-rooms : she had not so clearly discerned the inconveniences attending on an admission to the presence of her sovereign among persons of her own elevated rank, as to rejoice in the uselessness of the preparations she had made for it. Now and then, she had felt as if something was wanting to the respectability of her situation ; but the colonel's knock at the door of her town-house, or the sound of his horse's feet approaching her villa on the marshy common, could dissipate all these disturbing ideas. — In his present interference, there was nothing to get over, except perhaps a spasmodic calling to mind, when her husband spoke of her appearance at church,—of the length of time during which this duty had been remitted ; but this was remediable at any time ; ‘and she *must* try to think of it, painful as it would be to her, to see another in the office of dear Meryon.’

If spirit and activity are symbolical of health and peace, inertness and procrastination must bear an opposite construction ; but there were happily few to witness, or to comment on, the token afforded by these neutral powers, in the altered manners of the lady of Saint Emeril's ; and Hy-

men was, at present, too young to feel himself infirm. The colonel indeed had abundance of employment as Michaelmas approached : he was no novice in the various demands made on his attention and decision : he entered on his noble property with great credit, and promised to be an excellent steward of it. The abundant game found him in exercise and amusement ; and when obliged to come into contact with a neighbour, he, with a tone that commanded good opinion, apologized for the seclusion of himself and Lady Lynford, by the effect on her spirits produced by the shock of Mr. Meryon's unexpected decease. Her garden, her airing, and small pieces of elegant needlework—the billiard-table and chess, got rid of her time—read she could not, unless a French novel—her foot had not yet entered the library ; and if she must pass the door, her look was averted—so had she poisoned one of the purest springs of pleasure !

She was conscious that a most painful duty remained to be done.—An incumbent must be presented to the living. The care of the parish had been undertaken by the curate of the next ; but it was not to be expected that he could long sustain the double burden, and the fear of his making known his wish to be exonerated, urged a speedy arrangement. This seeming not to sug-

gest itself to the colonel's recollection, the baroness was driven to the necessity of mentioning it:—he assured her that neither that, nor any thing else, connected with the care of her interests, escaped him:—he did not trouble her with business, because he thought it to no purpose.—The disposal of the living should very soon be submitted to her.

The concluding words of this reply were what she could have wished them; and they allowed her to foster the intention of giving this very choice, though not very lucrative vicarage, to the young clergyman who had made himself responsible for the temporary duty, and whom she knew to have been a favourite with Mr. Meryon. Why she did not immediately say so, when talking to the colonel on the subject, she could not perhaps have told, even to herself; for she might not have ascertained the progress made on her mind by the silent step of his advancing authority.—A third person present at their conferences, might have thought she was afraid of him; but those who knew her before her marriage, would have answered by the question, 'Is that possible?'

October began, and the colonel expressed himself still charmed with this western country. Their comfort was undisturbed; and, like a new sailor, Lady Lynford was accustoming herself to

feel secure under the conviction of danger, when one lovely soft brilliant morning, before they had quitted their late breakfast-table, a servant entered the room, as if coming to announce as at a distance, persons who proved to be at his heels. They were two in number; and their appearance said, that some rough conveyance had brought them to this extremity of the kingdom.

CHAPTER VI.

THE intrusion was not, in itself, agreeable to the baroness, nor was it rendered less an intrusion, when she recognized the sordid person of Mr. Bray, and the aërial movements of Miss Wyerley, who was close behind him.

The colonel's habitual politeness did not play him false: he put the best face on a strong necessity; and Mr. Bray was not backward in showing his acceptance of it by a hearty breakfast, which occupying his instruments of speech, gave his companion, as she took 'a little coffee—the only thing,' she said, 'she could take when her eyes were so employed on the beautiful pictures and fine grand house'—an opportunity of detailing her own sufferings in the journey,—wherefore undertaken, did not yet appear—and to convey 'the very affectionate respects' of Mrs. Bray, whom they had left at the inn.

'And why did not Mrs. Bray accompany you?' asked the colonel, as if feeling that something must be said, and finding no one to do it for him.

'Why, I'll tell you fairly,' said she; 'Mrs. B. is much more shy, *modest*, I suppose I ought to

say, than your humble servant—I wasn't at all squeamish—I knew dear Lady L. would be so happy to see an old friend—so I volunteered my services to come on and explore.'

Lady Lynford moved on her chair, too indignant to be civil. The colonel, who began to know the signs of her feelings, said, ' You are too warm, baroness—shall I open the door ?'

' *All* of them,' she replied in a tone which he perfectly understood, as well as the import of the words. He could not forbear smiling—but he was soon in order again.

The appendix of the breakfast was now despatched; and the little priest begged to speak a few words in private to Colonel Wanston.

This movement, of necessity left the baroness to entertain Miss Wyerley; but it would have been silently performed, if there could have been silence where Miss Wyerley was. She had told of ' poor Mrs. Bray's poor health, poor thing !'—and had let out, not much to the excitation of Lady Lynford's pity, that ' she was far from happy,' and that ' Mr. Bray, though a charming man in his way, was rather oddish to live with ;'—when she began again, in a more lively tone than suited this ditty—' And now, my dear Lady L.—as you know I used always to call you—between friends as we are, and I hope always shall be,—

I have such a thing to tell you !—Do you know ? we hope to be your neighbours !—for Mr. B. is come *on purpose* to talk to the colonel about the living here that your old guardian had.—Would you suppose it possible that he never knew of his death till just the morning before we set off ?—You should just have given us a line—but, as I said in excuse for you, I dare say you had so many things to do !’

‘ To talk to the colonel ?’ repeated the baroness, drawing up at this attack on her own consequence :— ‘ I am rather surprised, I confess——’

‘ Ay, ay—I see I am wrong,’ replied Miss Wyerley— ‘ but never mind, between friends ;—he should have talked to *you* first, you think—but I dare say you will hear it all in time—*you can’t*, you know, refuse him—so, I dare say, we shall be very good neighbours.’

The emphasis of a word and half, was become alarming to the baroness. She was inclined to betake herself to the protection of her husband ; but recovering her caution, she would have been compelled to be silent and still, if her companion had not expressed a wish to see the flower-garden which lay before the windows— ‘ she was always so fond of flowers—she used, in the parties in London, to be famous for wearing flowers—she was so fond of

them!—she must go and see the dear flower-garden or any thing ; for she never was so delighted with a place in her life, and she dearly loved any thing new—novelty was the charm of life.'

Lady Lynford, glad to get into the air, rose, and almost drove her before her. Her visitor, in her juvenility, faced about—' You must make up your mind,' said she, ' to having me for a perpetual torment, if we come, and Mr. B. takes the living ;—for I'm sure I shan't like the bottom of the hill, half so well as I do the top.'

It was almost too much to endure, and it was relief to see the colonel and the little priest advancing. But the former appeared considerably embarrassed ; and Mr. Bray was close at his elbow, and looking up at him, with an odd sort of wry-necked expectation, as if waiting for an answer.

' What is all this ?' said the baroness to her husband—' I am surprised——'

' I will tell you, my lady,' replied Bray, ' what it is.—Here I stand—I am come all this way, to offer myself a candidate for your vicarage, and I do not intend to stir out of this house, till it is secured to me.'

' Why, surely, colonel !' said the baroness—' I thought you would have allowed *me* to present—and then I should have——'

' You would not, my lady,' said Bray, ' have

done any thing in this case, without consulting me.'

'Am I to be so insulted?' said her ladyship, expecting the protection of her husband. But he replying only very coolly, 'You must settle it between yourselves—I do not see it is a matter of any great consequence—such a small thing as it is'—she felt abandoned to her fate, and almost betrayed into the power of a man peculiarly odious to her.

There was a pause on which her destiny seemed to depend. Her husband looked up to the sky, while Bray stood as if patiently waiting the subsiding of this storm in his favour, or as if he was contemplating a brace of carp in a net, and saying, 'Struggle as ye list, ye cannot get out.'

To withdraw with the colonel for an exposition of that which she was feeling as an imperious necessity, was now Lady Lynford's only resource against the failure of her senses. She asked him to let her speak to him aside. Bray replied to this movement by a more gentle representation of the prudence that should guide a decision where there was such a dependence on *secrecy*.

The colonel retired with her; and the event of their consultation was, that Mr. Bray *must* have the living. Tears—wailings—expressions almost of repentance—accompanied this bitter, this ago-

nizing concession.—She talked of law and lawyers, of legal opinion on the validity of her father's prohibition. She talked in vain. Could she suppose that her husband, so interested in the inquiry, had not turned in his mind every expedient to secure his good fortune?—He omitted no argument or persuasion that could make submission easy: he even condescended to hint himself undervalued, if balanced against the little vicarage of St. Emeril:—it might possibly be this last argument that accomplished this necessary purpose; but the conflict was great, and the surrender desperately humiliating.—The only consolation at hand, was the resolution which she firmly declared, that while this man held the living, she would never enter the church. Perhaps the speaking look with which, in silence, the colonel answered her, was the keenest dagger that had reached her. It was almost expressive of a low valuation of her judgment, if she could suppose that any liberty of action remained to those who, by a secret departure from right, had put themselves in the power of the unfeeling or necessitous.

‘ You must go to these creatures by yourself, colonel,’ she said; ‘ for I cannot—I will not see any more of them.—Send them away, I entreat you,—or I shall be in a fever.’

He replied by a gentle persuasion, rather to go

through the rest of this disagreeable business quietly, and not to provoke stinging insects. He led her out of the room in which they had held their consultation, gasping and sobbing as she was, with the struggle she had undergone. She would have turned again into the garden, for the recovery of her respiration ; but her way was obstructed by the playful graces of Miss Wyerley, who met her, saying, ‘ I was just coming to look for you, my dear ; I asked Mr. Thomas, or John, or what’s his name, where you was ; and he said, in the saloon ; and was so polite as to put me in the right road, or I should never have got to you.’

Lady Lynford, almost bewildered and scarcely knowing what she did, suffered her husband to lead her to the breakfast-room. There she remained seated in silence. Mr. Bray, who had been prowling about, as if meditating a claim on the estate as well as on the living, was there again. The colonel had the compassion to draw him off ; but unless he had drawn off Miss Wyerley at the same time, the gain was little to Lady Lynford.

The excess of her irritation called for a remedy. When her companion began to speak, she bade her positively be silent, on pain of hearing much more than she would wish. This freed her ladyship from the necessity of holding conversation ; but it had no power to stop any tongue but her own,

There is a resource for humbled indignation, called in some of our eastern counties, 'maundering'—a gentle murmur of discontent and revolt, ready to break out into any thing at the first collision, which is used by many of the petty spirits of this world, in the progress of provocation. It requires some patience, or a deaf ear, to endure it; and this Lady Lynford, subdued as she was at the moment, could furnish; but she had not that ability which every one so tried must be wished to possess—the ability to say, 'Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther.'

It was added torture, when, on the re-entry of the colonel and Bray, she found that her husband had felt it requisite to ask him to dine.

The appalling fact was scarcely published, when Miss Wyerley, in high glee, replied to it, 'O yes! certainly, by all means—I'm sure I don't know where we shall get better accommodations—but, good Mrs. B.! we must not forget her—she is a dear good creature—my dearest Lady L., cou'dn't you get one of your men to step down to the inn? *you* have servants plenty.'

'O yes! I dare say *I can prevail* on one of them to go,' said her ladyship, tauntingly:—but taunting or any sort of reproof was thrown away on the lamb-like patience of Miss Wyerley. She had always something new to gaze at and admire;

—but, abruptly calling off her attention, and referring to her own person, she begged to be shown to a room where ‘she might put herself a little to rights.’

‘Send one of the *under*-house-maids to attend on Miss Wyerley,’ said her ladyship to the servant who answered the call.

‘O yes! that will do quite well, Mr. What’s your name,’ said she—and, taking up the little basket she had brought in her hand, and saying, ‘Only just a pair of shoes and so forths,’ she went up the great staircase, while Mr. Bray followed another man-servant across the hall, ‘to refresh,’ as he said, ‘with a little soap and water.’

‘Good heaven!’ said Lady Lynford to the colonel when they could speak, ‘what are we brought to?’

He could only shrug his shoulders.

‘And to think,’ continued she, ‘of giving this sweet place, to that savage, Bray!—to give him the charge that dear Meryon was so anxious to fulfil!—I must run away—I shall never be able to bear it.’

Miss Wyerley’s toilet was soon accomplished:—she was drest when she had put off half her clothes;—she returned before the colonel and the baroness had finished their dejected colloquy.

Mrs. Bray arrived, and on her timid entrance, Miss Wyerley, most obligingly, advanced for her encouragement, saying, ‘O! I am so glad you’re come.—You don’t know how delighted I have been—and Mr. Bray is to have the living; and we’re all to be such neighbours!’

It was consolation to the baroness, to see Mrs. Bray looking wofully ill, and not only in tears, but in convulsions of sorrow. Disdaining to expose her own feelings in endeavouring to abate hers, she took her out of the room, and would not suffer Miss Wyerley to follow. The average of her ladyship’s comfort must have been very low, to make the scene in which she had to support a part, tolerable to her; but it was comparative happiness to witness distress, in preference to what she had to endure in the breakfast-room.

Arguing with the poor woman on her share in the deception of her whom she was in conscience bound rather to warn of deception, she could trace this delinquency no farther back than to the time when the temptations of a home and a husband had made her forgetful of her charge. While she remained Goody Parr, she was ignorant of every obstacle to Lady Lynford’s predilection, except the inequality of situation; and when accidental want of caution between her husband and Miss Wyerley, betrayed the grand secret to

her, she was under the yoke of matrimony to a very despotic tyrant who imposed silence on her. Bitter repentance had followed self-accusation:—she now looked on her health and peace of mind as entirely ruined, and herself as responsible for every ill that could ensue.

It was not in the baroness's nature to oppress the self-abased ; and, perhaps, at the present moment, she felt something like a perverse gratification in singling out one of the party to whom she could be kind : she therefore paid the poor soul particular attention, which, far from removing her deep sense of her own demerit, served but the more to afflict her.

It was happily convenient to the vicar-elect of St. Emeril to be, as he termed it, 'near the scene of action;' and collecting from the lateness of the hour at which he had found the colonel and his lady at breakfast that morning, that he should lose time the next, if he slept at the great house, he was content to remove himself for the night to the inn. At the first movement, servants and lanterns were ordered ; and Lady Lynford making a strong distinction between Mrs. Bray and Miss Wyerley in her manner of parting, gladly saw them retreat.

A few days necessarily were spent in forms, and in arranging the coming to reside on the living.

The value of it not amounting to Mr. Bray's expectations, it was proposed that Mrs. Holby and her daughter should remain as boarders with Mr. and Mrs. Bray; and in these plans of accommodation Lady Lynford was in some danger of having Miss Wyerley quartered on her till she could be received at the vicarage; but here she triumphed, and the intruder was foiled. But she was forced to comply with Mr. Bray's demand of being constituted her chaplain; and when she sent him the silk scarf, she could have wished it the envenomed garment of Nessus.

On Mr. Bray's movements now, in some measure, depended those of Lady Lynford! It was her resolution to quit St. Emeril's as soon as he came to reside there, and with this intention, reluctant as he was to give up field-sports, the colonel's call to London agreed. Before, therefore, they had settled themselves in the enjoyment of their choice dwelling—before they were known to their neighbourhood in their new situations, they were quitting it, and in the beginning of November were going to reside in Grosvenor-square—the only exception to the emptiness of the houses round it.

To go into London under the most uninviting circumstances, and to shut herself up in a house that had as yet received none of its intended embellishments was relief to Lady Lynford when,

compared with what she had undergone in the country ; but yet, when the moment came for quitting St. Emeril's Court, it required almost more courage than the conflicts of her mind had left her. She had never yet been able to pass through the portico where she parted from Mr. Meryon—her carriage had always received her from the back-front of the house, but now, by choice, she went that way, as if to see, for the last time, the spot from which all her misery had flowed.

CHAPTER VII.

THE stillness in which she found the town did not displease the baroness; but when she had arrived at her house, and in an uneasy wandering about it, entered the rooms that had been the scenes of her early hopes and prospects—when she was forced to compare her expectations of happiness with its real existence, she was almost tempted to say, ‘How could I?’—And when she carried her recollections back to the time when she had no disguise with her guardian, and, bewildered in thought, found herself designing to write to him,—the obstinate and inexperienced might have profited by the revelation of her feelings, and by her repentance of that contempt of superior prudence, which had allowed her to place herself on a pinnacle from which there was no retreating.

The colonel’s mode of life was now of necessity much altered. Thin as the town was, he found associates, was much engaged, and, by consequence, less with her. When his hours were late, he consulted her quiet by retreating to a remote part of the house; and when at home,

he seemed disinclined to company and conversation. She had now abundance of leisure to be miserable. She knew not a creature in London.

The season did not admit of riding on horseback : she took her carriage-airings almost under the apprehension of footpads, from the loneliness of the environs of the town. Sunday and the resource of the church was now hailed as a festival and amusement ; and every day seemed to remove a finger of her hand from that by which she held, to keep her from sinking.

Such a desertion of cheerfulness required something which she looked for in vain, to prevent ill humour. The second effort of those who seek without success for content, is seeking for discontent ; and, alas ! this is generally too near their hand. She now began to call to mind, that the business of her settlements had not been brought forward ; and, with some repugnance, she mentioned it to her husband. The hint was met with polite readiness, but nothing was done. The next week, she repeated her hint ; and an excuse satisfied her. Again she waited—again, with less repugnance, she hinted, and again more than hinted. She urged, and was assured—but the matter stood still. At the next movement, the difficulty of finding trust-worthy persons was pleaded ; and, to her surprise, any publicity of their marriage was

deprecatd.—She was startled ; yet a few soft words restored her confidence.

But, when ruminating in solitude, she felt that her confidence was shaken, and she saw she was trifled with—who shall describe her feeling ?

Small symptoms of indisposition, the consequence of a fretted state of mind, were now taking the place of her fine generous flow of health ; and the colonel's irregularity of hours rendered it prudent in her, to secure her meals at more wholesome periods of the day ; but in attempting to reduce herself to table-solitude, which was new to her, she felt a sensation so very hostile even to the power of swallowing, that she began to seek for something of which this intruding affection might stand in awe, or which, at least, might control it. Even the old Lady Drumcanon would, at this moment, have been an acceptable resource ; but she was dead.—Miss Wyerley might have *been had*, at short warning and any moment ; but there are remedies worse than diseases.—What was to be done ?—There was Annette—the officious lively Annette—at her command ; and thus the high and haughty Baroness Lynford came down to dining with her maid.—Nothing of this world's proceedings is wonderful, if we can but understand the machinery by which it is effected.

The adoption of this remedy for loneliness, might make Colonel Wanston a little less scrupulous in condemning his wife to it—or his pride might be piqued at finding his place could be thus supplied. Annette now became her lady's companion rather than servant: she aired with her, slept in her room, and was in her confidence—at least, so far as to know that the colonel was growing negligent and the baroness unhappy. With the former occurrence she could not meddle.—The latter called out all her powers of consoling; and, perhaps, she did not always preach in vain, when she advised her lady to recollect what was due to herself, and to repay indifference in kind.

The natural restlessness of Lady Lynford's nature, made her act as if she wished to bring on some very unpleasant crisis between the colonel and herself; and apparently to accelerate it, she would frequently introduce the mention of her settlements, at the moment when she might expect the least satisfactory reply. But there was in her husband an *unprovocable* feature of character which made it difficult to rouse him. She had, once before marriage, seen him angry or approaching to it; but the instance stood single, and some peculiar feeling, or want of it, rendered her inefficient in this influence over him. It

was pity, because it put her to repeated trouble, and to no purpose:—the defeated power of provoking recoiled on herself in the power of being provoked; and she was unhappy without the consolation of knowing that she succeeded in making him so. ‘I cannot go on much longer in this way,’ said she to Annette—‘I must have an explosion and conclude.’

The arrival of Christmas afforded a prospect of her gratification. The steward at St. Emeril’s had written, in due time, on the subject of her ladyship’s yearly bounty to the poor, and the roast-beef, mince-pies, plum-puddings, and dances, which always graced and enlivened the servants’ hall at that season. The establishment indeed was now reduced to the few necessary to the care of that which could not be removed to London; but the diminution of number did not affect the memory of good received and expected; and the steward, obtaining no answer from his new master, next addressed himself to the baroness at the last moment. Her ladyship’s representation of the subject, seemed to come just in time to procure the relief her irritated feelings were seeking; and she made it, in no very circumspect terms;—but it failed: the colonel promised—and did nothing.

Small causes will sometimes produce large effects when great ones fail. The sick French-

man who could not be roused into emotion by all the endeavours of his friends, was teased into it by the friction of his bed-curtains; and Colonel Wanston, who had stood a large effusion of his lady's blistering elocution, was not proof against her observation that the weather was unusually warm for the time of year.

It was Christmas-day, and some allowance must be made for her mortification in renouncing her hospitable consequence when in Devonshire, for the meagre celebration of the festival in London. Every family who had relations, was engaged in a domestic circle on that day; and to this it might be owing that Colonel Wanston dined at home. His wife, in spite of all the exasperation of her feelings, was glad to have him with her; and aware of her own liability to overstep the neutral ground which they seemed to have marked out between them, she meant to have a strict guard on her ingenuousness, lest it might just then endanger the thin shell of their hollow peace. There could be no risque in saying the day was warm.

But happening to describe the temperature of the day as 'warmer than usual,' when the colonel came from the decanters and glasses in the dining-parlour, to the room in which she was sitting, there was an opportunity afforded for questioning what may be termed the *usuality* of a warm Christ-

mas-day, which, in his present mood, he did not suffer to pass by.

His style was so unlike that which she thought his, that she moved the candles to have a view of his countenance. He had been, through the whole of her acquaintance with him, invariably and most scrupulously temperate, apparently on principle or system ; but now, perhaps through the mere *ennui* of the solitary day, he looked as if wine had disturbed him. She felt offended and affronted by this want of caution when she alone was to be considered.

The conversation had begun by her moderate opinion that the day was warmer than usual. He only contradicted her as to the fact, and then tortured the expression 'than usual,' into all the forms that reference to time and place allowed it, as if to prove that what she said was no less absurd than false. But the dialogue, however harmlessly commenced, terminated in something little short of an intimation that, though their residence together was known, that they were married was less notorious, and that therefore caution was still necessary, and procrastination prudent. It needs not be specified that the question of settlements had been an adjunct to that of the weather.

A coaxing freedom, far below Colonel Wanstons's habitual manner, accompanied this avowal.

The baroness drew back—and the smile on his features said volumes.

And here burst the matrimonial bubble!—They spoke no more. The colonel ordered candles in the library; and she threw herself on the sofa where she had been sitting. Her hand was on the bell-pull to summon Annette—but she felt ashamed to reveal any thing like the insult she had received—she had, at the moment, no power of invention, and the truth was the last thing to be told.—Remaining alone till ten o'clock, she ordered the fire to be made up, and shawls to be thrown on her, and here, leaving Annette to conjecture what she pleased, she passed the night, her maid sleeping on an opposite sofa.

Till dawn of day, she was sleepless: a heavy slumber then relieved her mind, now growing accustomed to its rough usage; and at noon, she rose, and heard without concern, that the colonel was not at home.

Her indignation was not abated by ruminating on the cause; and as if entering on a new plan of proceeding, she contemplated the means she could most profitably use to prevent the obloquy to which she feared being condemned for her husband's more complete security or convenience; but every project that passed under her review, only served to make her sensible to the verification of

her guardian's prophecy, 'that want of ingenuousness towards him, would involve her in a labyrinth, from which she might not find an escape when she wished it.'

To give herself publicity was, in her judgment, her last resource; but this must be deferred till persons of her acquaintance could be got round her. The danger of betraying the important secret, was removed to a distant horizon, compared with the proximity of disgrace. Between her and her husband, there could be no longer any observance of terms: war seemed declared; and she was eager to strike the first blow—O! what would she not have given for the advice of a friend at this juncture?

Determined not to yield to the gale that seemed setting against her, and intending, without consulting the colonel, to make society for herself at the first opportunity, she gave orders for expensive clothes, and prepared for the earliest period of the spring-campaign of the metropolis—but even by this step, she only involved herself farther. In the unsettled state of their affairs, the colonel had been, at least, cash-keeper. She sent him a billet desiring a specific sum: the quarter of it was sent her; and she was subjected to the novel misery of not being able to pay ready money.

This scheme therefore could not be persevered

in, with *her* feelings. The clouds thickened. Her husband, by not attempting any reconciliation, gave her to understand that he had, with a purpose, offended her. If they met in the house, it was without speaking : if any thing must be said, it was briefly expressed on paper : and had not the hope of being able to devise some plan for herself when those families who had known her father, should come to London and be at hand, sustained her in a feverish delusion, she might have been impelled by her acute sense of injury without redress, to any imprudent step that seemed to lead towards victory. Imbecility made her patient, and she waited.

It was one of the few amusements in her power, to visit the book-sellers' and print-sellers' shops, which afforded a sight of the most expensive publications. To purchase was now out of her power ; and it was not a little mortifying when choice things were handed to her, as ' fit for her library,' as ' works known to meet her taste,' as ' things *unique* and suited to such patronage only as hers.'

She was, one forenoon of a fine January-day, in the most recondite corner of one of these treasuries, and was, for a time, soothing the perturbation of her mind, over a gigantic volume of engravings, which

led her into conversation with the person attending on her, when a message was brought to her, with a visiting-ticket. The messenger said that the gentleman to whom that ticket belonged, had recognized her ladyship's voice; and the ticket said, 'Earl of Winchmore'—the place of residence added with a pen, was an hotel.

Thought, at such a moment, was of no use.—Whatever had passed between her ladyship and the earl, was forgotten in the recollection of his entire worth and possible usefulness. At least the introduction of himself to one of whom he had so much cause to complain, indicated to Lady Lynford that he must mean kindly towards her—and under her present sensation, perhaps, had the acceptance been less discreet, it would not have been forborne.

In their meeting, it seemed as if they had agreed to take up their acquaintance from a former period, overleaping any cause for shyness. The baroness felt gratified by his lordship's congratulation on her marriage, and named Colonel Wanston aloud, trying to substantiate her credit on that, which she had done secretly under the impression of disgrace. She wished for some private conversation with the earl; but to accomplish this, without departing from what was due to her own respectability, was not easy to her. Fortunately, he was desirous of the same indulgence, and asking

her, as the day was a brilliant frost, and the cold not intense, if she was going to walk, he offered to meet her in Hyde-park.

She drove thither, got out of her carriage, her men-servants following her, and soon saw his lordship. The park was gay though not crowded ; and she was saying frivolous things while she was thinking how to introduce something more serious, when the earl, as if to shorten prefaces, expressed himself impatient to explain his situation at the moment. He began by saying, ‘ By compact, Lady Lynford, let us understand that we never advert in any way to any thing unpleasant to either of us—we have met again—we were early friends :—let us be long and late friends. If you will accept such friendship as a brother’s, I can offer it you, and with perfect propriety, for to-morrow morning I marry my pretty little cousin, Mary Stapleton, whom you knew a child, and who, I am certain, will be most happy to be introduced again to you :—I have not the honour of knowing Colonel Wanston ; but as soon as we return to town, which will be before the end of February, I hope we shall meet on the pleasantest terms of domestic intimacy.’

So few hours before a man was to be a bridegroom, did not appear to the baroness a fit season for endeavouring to interest him in her concerns :

she therefore satisfied herself with a very cordial reception of the overture, and went home under the comforting assurance that she had a friend who might prove highly useful to her. She felt no jealousy of Miss Stapleton, but she was not far off from fulfilling the prophecy inscribed on her letter by her guardian, on her former rejection of Lord Winchmore.

Every consideration rendered it prudent to convey to Colonel Wanston the knowledge of this circumstance, and she therefore wrote a note to him informing him of what had occurred to her. She hoped the inference he would draw from the prospect of a renewed intimacy, might operate on his mind in her favour. The accidental rencontre must frustrate any plan degrading to her which he might have devised ; and she now should have no reluctance in insisting on her settlements.

Better effects than those produced by this accidental meeting, the baroness could not reasonably expect. The colonel offered himself to breakfast with her the next morning, and then talked of pecuniary arrangements. He ‘did not doubt that Lord Winchmore would accept the situation of trustee for her,’ and ‘every thing should be ready against the time of his return to town.’—And now all chagrin was obliterated, and she was angry with herself, that she had ever suffered

an unfavourable opinion of her husband to enter her mind. Perfect peace prevailed—domestic association was renewed; and though the colonel's evening-engagements were generally late, this was tolerable, when he was, in the intervals, not unkind. Lord Winchmore's nuptials—very important nuptials to Lady Lynford!—took place—bride-cake had been sent in form; and the earl and countess wrote, as soon as they were settled in a house which they had taken at Roehampton, expressing their impatience to renew their friendship with the baroness, and to make acquaintance with Colonel Wanston.

Such good dispositions accelerated whatever was desirable; and to cultivate them was as much Lady Lynford's inclination as interest. She took the first opportunity of visiting the bride at her villa; and on seeing her, after the lapse of those years that form the person and character, she was at a loss to understand how Lord Winchmore could ever have brought his matrimonial intentions to bear upon two objects so little resembling each other, as the actual Lady Winchmore and herself. She did not recollect the two marriages of her apothecary in the country, and the similarity of his admiration of his two wives, one of whom, as she had herself observed, was 'bone without flesh,' and the other 'flesh without bone'—the one a

very child, needing leading-strings—the other a prominent character enduring neither control nor contradiction. The baroness was not indeed in the mind to ask in the depreciating accents of Fair Ellinor to Lord Thomas, ‘Is *this* your bride?’—but when she had saluted the young countess, and was retreating to a seat, she certainly glanced at a mirror as she passed, and in idea measured height with her to whom she had left the earl’s heart.

In this visit, the colonel had not accompanied her; and the countess, informed by what she heard, that Lady Lynford had business of a private nature to discuss with his lordship, good-naturedly afforded every facility. But alone with the earl, it was very difficult to say what she had to say, without saying too much, and impossible to prevail on herself to say all; and had not her very unusual embarrassment betrayed her, she might have lost much of the advantage she had gained, by reservations that ill suited the confidential assistance of which she stood in need.

Taking up her own story in the middle, she strove to fix on a point of time for beginning it, in which and after which, she might appear the least to blame; but the questions of ‘How?’ and ‘When?’ and ‘Where?’ soon puzzled her; and his lordship cut the matter short, by saying, ‘Allow me to say a few words.—What I observe—I wish I

may be mistaken—but what I observe—however indelicate it is in *me* to form such a surmise—leads me most painfully to fear, there has been some want of caution in your proceedings, that is a diminution of your comfort—I do not wish you to answer me, unless by contradicting me ; and *that* you cannot do in terms too reproving for my thankful endurance.—I would rather know any thing, than that you are unhappy with the man to whom you have acted so generously. Now call me any ugly names you can recollect—threaten me that you will tell my wife how ill I have behaved to you—tell me any thing—but that you have cause to wish—you had been less precipitate.’

She could only rise and retreat to the window. His lordship left the room ; and when he returned, the baroness seemed triumphant over emotions which were warred down by great energy of character, while he himself brought the aspect of one subdued by overpowering regret.—Neither countenance was a true index ; for the baroness was ready to sink at heart ; and the earl had added to great natural firmness, all that his habitual regard for her, and the demand of the moment, could furnish.

‘ I am not returned to be inquisitive or severe,’ said he—‘ I am come to profess my intimate con-

cern in your situation, and my resolution to assist you in making the best of it—only tell me enough to direct me——’

Much of obstacle was at length overcome by prudent kindness; and she prevailed on herself to relate the story of her early-impressed predilection, and the unexpected discovery of him in whose favour it had been formed. She could not restrain herself from revealing, and with the bitterest compunction, the want of Mr. Meryon’s sanction, and she was drawing on him, without designing it, all the gentle reproach that his lordship’s equity could bestow on the presumed opposition of a person in trust, a little heightened perhaps by a wish to afford comfort to the party before him.

Here her integrity interposed;—but it led her to do that, without doing which, she could have derived little consolation from Lord Winchmore’s friendship. With solemnity befitting the confession of murder,—demanding the most sacred surety of secrecy,—she put him in possession of the tremendous truth that hung, like a sword by a hair, ready to fall upon her head—and little short was he of fainting while he listened.

‘Not to blame you,’ said he, when he could again speak, and she sate, not sobbing or even

shedding a tear—for it was nothing new to *her* feelings:—‘Not to blame you,’ said he, ‘would be to disclaim all sincerity—but yet, for *you* I can make *some* apology—for your husband, *none*. —The man who would do this, must be guarded against:—every thing must be secured *from* him, if not *to* you——’

‘But now,’ said he, ‘my very dear Lady Lynford, whom I shall always consider as my sister, ask yourself whether any thing in this world is worth purchasing at the price of all peace, and whether all the world could give, is capable of affording any real enjoyment, if poisoned by continual apprehension. Very small motives have induced many of your sex and mine, to renounce the world and betake themselves to monastic life. —You are not called to austerities—you would have a competency, if you could heroically resolve to get rid of all cause of fear:—many a young woman, with no larger an income than yours, marrying a military man, of rank much inferior to the colonel’s, lives very comfortably; and, upon my word, Lady Lynford, though I must not talk of *my* experience, I may say that, in all I have seen of the world, either in this country or any other, I have observed that such real comfort as will be in your power, is the only eatable part of the fruit of life:—high rank and great affluence

may be the rind and the shell ; but they must be got rid of, before you can get at any thing that will suit a healthy palate. Try now to familiarize yourself to the idea of private life. If the colonel's professional duties keep him in London—only set out carefully at first ; and you may do very well. Be near *us*, and you may have society without trouble.—You will have a cheerful heart ;—every time you reflect on the sacrifice you have made, it will furnish fresh cause for satisfaction.—And it might be done in a way to secure the gratitude of those benefited by it—all this, I would manage for you.—Or shall we try a compromise ?—what do you say to *that* ?—At all events, remember this, that when I assume the protecting privilege of a brother towards you, I include in it a resort to me in any case,—I hope it may not occur—which may make a residence, longer or shorter, with my wife, or near us, convenient to you.'

Lady Lynford could not reply.—In various ways every one of these suggestions was odious to her. Neither the whole nor a part of her inheritance, would she hear of renouncing ; and the offer of protection seemed to include in it, the certain conviction that she must not expect it from her husband. But it would have been too flagrant a breach of justice, to have been angry with him

who was thus racking his invention to serve her. She therefore showed her sensibility to the kindness proffered, expressed her persuasion that Colonel Wanston intended nothing but what was right, and seemed to wish Lord Winchmore to think that, in reckoning on her chances of security, he was too much inclined to the unfavourable side. ‘Consider,’ said she, ‘those people whose interest it is to disturb me, are wretchedly poor; consequently, if I keep myself in such a situation as that they cannot reach me but through a court of justice, I am safe.’

Lord Winchmore shook his head. ‘I see,’ said he, ‘Adversity will never be a good school-mistress to you——’

‘No, no,’ said she quickly—‘give me prosperity—give me power and affluence, I can do any thing that is right; but depress me, and you put me on expedients—a necessity, I confess, not favourable to the growth of any thing worth rearing.’

‘Let us suppose a case,’ said his lordship.—‘What would *you* do, if, unconnected with this untoward business, and, with great means, you found yourself near the family who may take advantage of your forfeiture—supposing you saw them deserving and poor, and that you knew they wanted only money to prosecute their claim?’

‘ I would furnish them with it, certainly,’ she replied.

‘ I am sure you would—and you would not consider the mischief you were bringing on the other party.’

‘ No; I should consider nothing but the justice of the case, and the hardship under which they were suffering.’

‘ I believe it; but do you think no one would do this but yourself?’

‘ I dare say many would.’

‘ May *they* not then meet with such a friend?’

‘ O! my lord,’ she replied, closing the argument, ‘ I am tortured sufficiently—I can only say that, on *this* point, my mind is made up.—Nothing but force shall ever turn me out of St. Emeril’s.—If I had, with my eyes open, run counter to my father’s cruel will, something might be said against me; but no one would have suspected any danger in what I did; and therefore those must act unjustly by *me*, who would enforce the penalty.’

So ended the debate. Lady Lynford returned home—found the colonel there, reported Lord Winchmore’s ready acceptance of the trust, and described Lady Winchmore’s pleasing manners—received his approbation, and with it, a supply of money; and thus matters were put in good train.

All sense of *ennui*—all want of occupation or society was now done away; for the journies to Roehampton answered every purpose. Lord Winchmore and Colonel Wanston met; and arrangements were sketched and perfected by the former, which placed Lady Lynford's whole property out of the reach of her husband. His lordship seemed, in her judgment, to carry his care for her too far; and, had he not been in her confidence, she might very probably have taken part with the colonel against herself; but the earl had too much in his power to leave at her option the reception his well-intentioned and well-sustained endeavours for her, should meet with. He was very gentle, but very firm: he understood business, and could furnish proper persons to conduct it: he knew, better than herself, what was necessary for her security; and in recommending co-trustees with himself, he made it a condition of accepting the situation, that she should never, at any time, or under any circumstances, attempt to induce him or them, to release any part of her settlements. So much caution seemed to her superfluous; but she gained no attention: he told her that trustees were unfit for confidence if they had ears or hearts.

In the personal comparison of Lord Winch-

more and Colonel Wanston, there could be no hesitation in deciding in favour of the latter. The earl was a quiet worthy thinking man, highly bred, and a scholar, intent on public business and making his relaxation the formation and use of a fine library. He exhibited no striking points of character or deportment ; but every particular in the structure of his mind had a good tendency. He had not the *commanding* and *imposing* that were to be found in Colonel Wanston ; but, when they had their first interview, the baroness could not but remark an effect just contrary to her expectation, and to what she had predicted to herself. Notwithstanding the exterior superiority of the colonel, she was surprised to see, that, face to face, their characters seemed changed : her husband looked aside whenever the earl looked straight forward ; and never before had she observed in the composed features of Lord Winchmore, such a scrutinizing direction of the eye, as that with which he read the colonel's physiognomy. It was that of a surgeon, sadly doubting whether a wound under his inspection, had not been inflicted with a poisoned weapon, and looking on the instrument to detect the venom. Cordiality, there was none ; but there was no hostility. The earl might be said in common phrase ' to carry things with a high hand ;' yet the colonel made no opposition ;

nor did a remark unfavourable to her friend escape him. From a word or two dropt in one of their meetings, an odd suspicion came into the baroness's mind, that intermediate private visits took place between them ; but on this point no satisfaction was given her. There was some understanding with each other which she could not develop ; but she was too well treated by each, to have any right to question them.

A little gentle attempt at opposition was made by the colonel, when, in the prospect of the new-married couple's coming into London, the arrangements of the two families were talked of, and the neglect of his lady's presentation at court, which would have enabled her to introduce the bride, was lamented. He then started questions as to the state of the Grosvenor-square house, and seemed desirous to bring on, as quickly as he could, its repairs and improvements, but, in the prospect of a spring of peculiar gratification to the ladies, he was over-ruled.

Another week was to have concluded the residence at Roehampton, and to bring Lady Winchmore into Lady Lynford's neighbourhood, when, on a sudden, a summons from the Dowager Countess of Winchmore, who was dangerously ill at Nice, obliged the young couple to undertake a continental journey, made very inconvenient by

anarchy and war, and not without peculiar peril to the subjects of Great Britain. The earl's going was absolutely necessary ; and his pretty little wife would not remain behind. It was a grievous necessity, but every encouragement was held out to hope that it was only a short deferring their schemes of pleasure. On their departure, the colonel easily persuaded Lady Lynford to take advantage of the opportunity to get the house in order:—the project of an agreeable surprise to their friends was alluring, and before a week had elapsed, her ladyship had the pleasure of getting to her carriage from under the scaffolding raised against the front of her house for its repair.

CHAPTER VIII.

LADY Lynford might have been excused had she taken up a notion that her happiness and Lord Winchmore's presence were connected; for he had been gone a very short time, when a sad inroad was made on it by the unexpected arrival in town of Mr. Bray and Miss Wyerley, for the express purpose of solicitation and annoyance. The former felt, or affected to feel himself injured by the small profit he was likely to make of the living of St. Emeril, under the general dislike of his parishioners; and the latter had sickened of Devonshire. Money was demanded by both—by the one to allow him more of sordid enjoyments, and by the latter to enable her, as she said, 'to see a little more of the world!'—The colonel affected not to interfere in his wife's affairs; and she, a little informed by Lord Winchmore's methods, could now act with more promptitude and resolution. She did not refuse to confer an obligation which she knew she could make dependent on good behaviour; but she talked high of Lord Winchmore, and to a degree that seemed almost to intimidate the demanding beggars. The

promise of a yearly addition to his income, on the repeated condition of his most scrupulous concealment of what he knew, sent the vicar again to his sick wife; but Miss Wyerley could not, as she said, 'tear herself from dear Grosvenor-square.' The rent of a small lodging near it, was her demand; and on the same conditions, and with an order not to be troublesome, it was granted.

In a way far inferior in comfort to that which the last few weeks had produced, the baroness existed through March, teased by the intrusions of Miss Wyerley, kept in dirt and confusion by workmen, and unaccountably restricted in her expenses by the colonel. No letters reached her from Lord or Lady Winchmore, consequently she had reason to fear for those which she wrote to them. Her husband entered very little into her anxiety: he was never cheerful, and little at home: his hours were destructive to all intercourse; for they did not admit of meeting: his rest was irregular, his meals were uncertain; and when he seemed at home for the night, he went out, and remained out till daylight.

The mystery, at length in the first days of April, unravelled itself: the workmen had been dismissed, when the outside-repairs of the house were hastily finished and the inside was only the worse for their endeavours. Colonel Wanston

had been out three nights ; and his man had each day dressed him at a club-house ; and Lady Lynford was beginning to make up her mind to urge a separation on the return of Lord Winchmore, when one morning Miss Wyerley spun into the room where she was sitting, with an open note in her hand, and throwing it on the table in great agitation, said, ‘ Read *that*—he’s off—you’ll see how it is.’—The scarcely legible scrawl stated, that the writer ‘ had been more *unfortunate* than ever’—that ‘ circumstances of the most unpleasant and imperious nature, compelled him to sell his commission and quit the country, never to return to it’—that ‘ he could not expect, nor did he wish, Lady Lynford to share his fortunes’—that ‘ at present his plans were not formed, but that he would write again soon, through the channel at present used.’—The initials of Colonel Wanston concluded the epistle.

Some little trace of concern in employing Miss Wyerley’s mediation rather than writing to his wife, might be discerned ; but excepting this, there was little to feed self-complacency. The time indeed for heart-breaking was gone by : passion had ceased when the object was attained ; and conjugal love was vexed to death. The assent of no one good principle had ever been asked in her ladyship’s proceedings ; therefore it

was not reasonable to expect any support from an acquitting conscience, under a situation of such peculiarly mortifying disgrace.

When the first feeling of exasperated anger was over ; when jealousy for her ill-used wealth—when indignation at the many affronts which she had experienced subsided, it was impossible not to think on herself, and as impossible not to perceive the very hollow character of the power on which her pride, through life, had been founded. Every comparison of herself which she had ever made with others, had been to her advantage :—in person, manners, rank, wealth, and intellect, taken in the aggregate, she knew—and it was very fit that she should know it,—she stood unrivalled : but in the enjoyment of these great blessings, their demands on her were forgotten—and she could not but confess, that the pretty little fair-haired, small-featured, unprominent Countess of Winchmore, had, even in the short period of her acquaintance with her, received infinitely more gratifying attentions from her husband, than she herself had ever received from the colonel, smothered as he had been with the plenitude of choice blessings which her partiality carried with it.

But she was yet far too good, she had a mind too noble in its nature, to admit of the smallest settlement of envy on the happier lot of Lady

Winchmore. The young countess's conduct had been too amiable to allow her even to wish she had prevented her in accepting Lord Winchmore; but regret is prone to seek its source, and in her reflections on the point most admitting the hypothesis of a possible contrariety, Lord Charles, the early object of her sportive coquetry, came up to her memory, and the words of old John Brown again sounded in her ears. It seemed a moment when the tough *fasciculus* of compounded pride might have been broken, without even cutting the ligaments that held it together.

But there were supporting hopes for her. Lord and Lady Winchmore would return; and her first use of his friendship should be the arrangement of a legal separation from Colonel Wanstons. 'And what then?' was a question that obliged her to recollect how precarious was her tenure of St. Emeril's, and that Mr. Bray was in the place of dear Meryon!—Still there was the same resource. Lord and Lady Winchmore were a host of protection, and residing near them, she could not be destitute of comfort.

Common discretion required that she should make herself acquainted with the worst of her situation as it then stood; and she was bracing her mind to the necessity, when, before she could hear again from the colonel, a newspaper-para-

graph of facts and initials, gave her intelligence that demanded all the solitudes of Annette, and all the applications that compel the mind to remain at its post, when it is the most inclined to desertion.

The paragraph indeed told her nothing new, except that desperation and a pistol had made her a widow ; but the paragraph was long and biographical, and so correct and minute, that in devouring its narrative, she every moment expected to see the truth she most dreaded, revealed. But it was omitted ; and she saw her own lot deplored, as ‘Baroness L.’ and was thankful that she had escaped the betraying the important secret—and the presence of Miss Wyerley at the moment. She came indeed, as every day witnessed ; but the baroness had had time to shut herself up in her bed-chamber with Annette, whom she was soon able to inform of what had occurred, and to warn that, under the peculiar circumstances of the colonel’s unpardonable conduct, she should not think herself bound to observe, any further than suited her own convenience, the formalities of widowhood.

She had more reason than she could avow, for this prompt decision : she instantly saw the prudence of taking this opportunity of obliterating all traces of her marriage ; but to her waiting-

woman it was sufficient to say, she felt ill-treated and resented it, and Annette was as ready to brand the colonel with all opprobrious epithets, as she had been to hail him lord of St. Emeril's.

It was not now, that Lady Lynford could exercise that frankness and that liberty of speech, which she had characterized as her own on a former occasion, when she replied, that 'she generally meant what she said, or said what she meant.' Disguise was become necessary even with Annette; and this demand on caution, added presently to her ladyship's many other distinctions, a finished circumspection that would not have disgraced a diplomatic character.—She could mislead Annette—she could write, in terms almost ingratiating, to Miss Wyerley—and in the mean time, she was determining on her own measures.

Demands for money poured in upon her; and the absence of Lord Winchmore would have been a paralysing affliction, had not her banker been disposed to give her his assistance in going through legal forms. Much that was painful she was obliged to confess; but she was heard with respect and sympathy; and her gain by giving her partial confidence, was great. She learnt that the sums remitted from St. Emeril's to her banker, were immediately drawn out by the colonel, that he was known as violently addicted to play, and

that the necessity of his going abroad was incurred by his forfeiture of the only species of honour recognized in the society he frequented.

Her first wish was to get out of England, and to join Lord and Lady Winchmore, wherever they might be ; but their silence was discouraging, and the situation of the continent did not admit of precipitate attempts to travel on it. Yet the necessity of frugality to repair the indignity her property had suffered by the unbounded rapacity of the colonel, dictated retirement ; and any means by which she could get away from the prying observation of Miss Wyerley, and keep out of the reach of Mr. Bray, were desirable.

She therefore resolved on the sacrifice of every thing but her title ; and abandoning her house and dismissing her servants, to become a wanderer till she could hear of Lord Winchmore, whom report now gave out as stopt in the interior of France under very perilous detention.

To act without a confidant was to act without assistance ; and this was scarcely possible. It was her determination to trust no one of her servants, not even Annette, and to submit to any personal inconvenience rather than carry with her any witness of what had befallen her. But she had not the power of the powerless. She could not get rid of those about her, and away from her

house, without observation, unless some intermediate means were at hand. These she found in the willingness of her banker to assist her in her plans: and, having committed to him the care of her property, with authority to act for her, she resolved to make her next going out of her house her last, and, under any pretence that she could devise, to set out on her wild scheme of retirement.

Annette's society was not now wanted; and Miss Wyerley's offers of cheering her loneliness, were gently declined, that she might have leisure to put in order those things which required her own care. The first of these was the miniature of her late husband—that miniature which might be called the cause of her errors and misfortunes:—the care she took of it was effectual:—without looking at her painting, she placed it in the midst of a brisk fire, not suffering the little green curtain, the frame, splendid as it was! nor even the glass, to exist to her reproach—so changed were her feelings! and so changeable will ever be found those of a mind acting on such wayward principles of self-indulgence!

Having put every thing in train at home, and induced her banker to prepare whatever she could not privately manage, she gave out that she was going for change of air, to his house, a few miles

from London, to which, she said, it was not convenient that she should carry any servant of her own : his carriage came to take her : her trunks were fastened to it ; and, with one deep sigh, she threw herself upon the world. He had engaged for her two respectable persons, man and wife, as courier and waiting-woman, and had purchased, by her order, a plain travelling-chariot.—These, now her only indulgences, awaited her at the banking-house, and, with just as much intervention of time as prevented communication, she set forward.

Scotland and Wales had been proposed to her consideration as affording her a retreat ; but, recollecting the ecstatic pleasure she had once enjoyed with Mr. Meryon, in a tour through the midland counties, on arriving in the neighbourhood of Monmouth, she decided in her own mind, on making it her ultimate destination ; but this she did not reveal even to her assisting friend. To give time for all reports to die away, before she settled, she lingered on the road, wearing no mourning, no ring, and submitting rather to have her identity or her sanity called in question, than to be recognized as that which she once had so fondly wished herself, and so precipitately made herself. Her servants did credit to the recommendation on which she had taken them : the

time of year was late in April : the weather was fine ; and her situation—was only not quite the worst it might have been !

Halting at every place where there was any apology for remaining, and staying as long as a traveller, supposed in quest of health, could reside without attracting curiosity, she saw much that would have been pleasant to any one but herself ; and which, though far from pleasant to her, would have been more painful at a former time than now—for the memory of dear Meryon was becoming tender and soothing ; and she was beginning to court, as relief from her turbulent regrets, the softened recollection of his sterling worth and amiable qualities. Prospects to which he had introduced her, and objects of curiosity which he had pointed out to her, spots on which he had stood, and words to which she could assign ‘ a local habitation,’ were now growing precious ; and siding with him against herself, in the ultimate judgment on her departure from prudence—she felt drawn nearer to him, as if her suffering had stood in the place of confession and penitence, and his consequent forgiveness, as it might have done, had restored peace and harmony between them, and consigned to the winds every cause of uneasiness.

But she had many hours of forlorn medi ation,

when it was impossible not to compare what she was, a voluntary exile and a degraded wanderer ! with what she might have been, had she only given a candid attention to the anxiety of her guardian for her happiness. And even now, chilled as were her spirits,—at times when a newspaper told of the movements or splendid settlements of the companions of her childhood, her still young heart would beat with a fancied participation in the scene, till its pulsations were checked by the mortifying conviction that she had for ever barred the access to domestic comfort, against herself. At not twenty-two years of age, she was condemned to unconsolated widowhood ; for, however free to marry again, the forfeiture she had incurred was an irremovable obstacle.—Yet she preserved her integrity of good feeling towards Lord Winchmore ; nor would she permit herself to recollect, that had he remained single, he might have accomplished a compromise for her, and have shielded her, by his superior income, from any feeling of her loss. She continued steadily to look to his return, and was disposed to prepare her temper for whatever demands on her forbearance, a residence near him and Lady Winchmore, might make.

In one of her halts, which admitted of a return from London, she wrote to her banker, and

received from him intelligence of his proceedings in her affairs. Her house was put in charge to two of her servants: her carriages and horses were sold, and demands were paying off as fast as they were substantiated. Annette was gone back to St. Emeril with other servants brought thence, and a letter had been received which was forwarded. It was from poor Mrs. Bray, stating her concern at the news she had heard of Colonel Wanston's death, describing her own miserable ill health, and more miserable endurances under her husband's brutish temper and Mrs. Holby's interference in her family-management, and informing her of Miss Wyerley's having, at last, made up her mind to accept Mr. Bray's nephew, (a mere boy, as Mrs. Bray remarked, compared to Miss Wyerley!) who was going to settle in the West Indies.

The last paragraph was the *bocca dolce* to all the rest; and Lady Lynford began to hope that, one by one, her anxieties would expire.—There was something, at first sight, tempting in an offer of Mrs. Bray to quit her husband and resume the humblest of her stations near her; and the baroness retaining her habitual regard and commiserating her sufferings, felt a wish to indulge her; but the smallest degree of reflection repre-

sented her marriage as an insuperable barrier ; and unwilling to refuse what she could not grant, she contented herself, or rather obliged herself to rest content, with destroying the letter.

Having courted the abstraction of meditation on sublunary inheritance, in many daily visits to the frowning towers of Warwick Castle,—charmed her fancy in the once holy vale of Evesham—stood in airy contemplation of the riches of nature on the beacons of the Malvern hills, and almost wished herself the *woman* of Ross, she reached Monmouth with feelings of undiminished admiration, mixed with tender remembrance, in beholding the belt of beauty that surrounds it.—That she might choose well that which she meant to last long, she would not choose hastily.—O ! that she had been as cautious in a still more important choice !—And betaking herself to the best inn, she made inquiry as to the neighbouring villages, and their capacity of affording a comfortable residence to an invalid.—On one requisite defect she meant to insist—the village, where she set up her rest, should have no house of entertainment for persons of a superior rank in life, lest chance might bring some one who might re-

collect her.—Ale and bread and cheese must be the utmost that ‘the capital inn’ in the village she should fix on, could afford—and this she found, just where she could have wished it.

Here, in a house not disgracing her by want of elegance, and not flattering her pride by superiority over its compeers, moderately furnished, and placed in a lovely luxuriant garden, she ended her pilgrimage. She allowed her servants to give what report of her they thought fit; and judging by the manner in which she was surveyed at church, on the first Sunday of her appearance there, it might be supposed that they had described her as ‘an excellent good lady, who had seen better days,—had had a great deal of trouble,—was in very bad health,—and, at times did not know exactly what she did.’ Her looks certainly corroborated such opinions; for she had lost her colour, her flesh, the stateliness of her tread, and the vigorous uprightness of her figure, to a degree that almost formed a security against any remembrance of her.

It was not her intention to live entirely in solitude; neither did she wish to solicit acquaintance. There were respectable families dispersed within the compass of a short walk; and of these she did not mean to be shy; but her declared

rank rendered them scrupulous of intruding on her, without encouragement; and she had time to 'commune with her own heart' before she was called on to shape her deportment to the humble pretensions of those who were to form her society.

CHAPTER IX.

IT was the height of summer ; and the novelty of living in the midst of scenery which had heretofore appeared more like the representation of poetry, painting, or a golden dream, than the casual assemblages of nature or the means of wealth, filled her mind with a calm sedate feeling of enjoyment, such as she had never known, and which seemed to supply the want of every thing else. She was never tired of gazing, and was amused and occupied for many days, with watching the magic effects of passing shadows and varying lights, on the view which her windows commanded of the Wye, its rich woods, and magnificent charms. Accustomed as she had been to the expanse of sea at St. Emeril's, she accepted this more limited scenery, as accommodated to her reduced situation, and felt a glow of gratitude that any secondary pleasure could be thus vivid.

When novelty began to abate, she found herself growing attached by acquaintance ; and in her solitary walks she was first sensible to the pleasures of liberty, and then to the use that might be made of it. The disposition to think in still-

ness, came like an invisible companion—retrospect was still painful ; but the resolution to make the future less so, prepared even that for endurance.

One of her first perceptions was the truth of Lord Winchmore's assertion, that rank and affluence beyond a certain ratio, have little profitable connexion with the solid good of life. She could not but confess that, when settled in her comparatively humble abode, she should have every thing necessary to all the comfort she was capable of enjoying ; and it was one of her earliest determinations not to encumber herself with more. With only such servants as were necessary to her, without horses, and in a country not furnishing calls for expense, she began to contemplate the amusing experiment of living on her smallest income, the five hundred pounds a year decreed to her by her father, in the event of her transgressing as she had done. The idea came recommended, like the frolic of a masquerade, by its wayward novelty, and was adopted. On this scale she regulated her small household, and was proof against the being designated by her neighbours, in more senses than one, '*poor Lady Lynford !*'

The prohibitory circle with which her *casino* seemed surrounded, was first passed by an elderly gentleman, who, with the accent of a foreigner, and the demeanour of one of the

old court, had given her 'good morrow,' when crossing on her early path. A question occasionally asked of him, as to distant objects or untried ways, fomented distant politeness into informing civility ; and the proffered loan of a book, brought on a visit.

What the crafty De Quintes had represented as the ill fortune of the imaginary duke, father to their supposititious count, was nearly the real state of this resident on the banks of the Wye. He was a Frenchman, and of a rank so high, that a failure of male-issue might have removed him from the rank of a subject. He left his visiting-ticket inscribed, ' Le Comte Hermont de Broderaye,' and he did not accelerate his own degradation, by any wilful neglect of his prerogatives. Perhaps few men of his rank had spent more money than he had done, in the period from seventeen to forty ; and even in his decadence, he could talk with exultation of his magnificent hotel, designed by Mansard, in Paris, of the homage done at his castle-gate for fiefs held of his ancestors—of his constant supply of English horses—and even of the mis-use he had made of wealth and favour.

And of things far better worth recording, he could tell ;—for he had lived, from childhood, in the court of his own nation, and had seen many

noxious weeds sown and overrunning the soil to which he owed his birth.

A partiality for England, perhaps increased by, if not founded on, his having married an English woman, had brought him often to visit and reside in it; and his hereditary profession of protestantism, had induced him to suffer his only son, who happened to be born in England, to consider him an Englishman.—‘I am glad I did so,’—said the count, explaining to Lady Lynford his situation—‘because, as things are turning out in my country, he cannot hope to regain what I have lost; and to be deluded by hope could do him no good.’—‘True,’ answered the baroness—and sighed.

This son he described with the fondness of a proud parent; but shaking his head, as if he had sadly disappointed him, he expressed his deep regret at his choice of a profession. He had designed him for the army, for which he had every requisite; and in which the count could have furthered his interests, on the foundation of services rendered to the English ministry by his loyalty and extensive information. But the young man had imbibed an early predilection for letters and the arts; and as his father’s very narrow circumstances could not admit of indulging these tastes gratuitously, he very soon decided on the

church as his profession, and had most conscientiously and most efficiently bent his mind and all his faculties, to make the most of the great exertion and many privations which his indulgent father made and cheerfully endured, to obtain for him the advantages, first of a public school, and subsequently of Oxford. These expenses had ceased to fetter him: his son had been, in the most gratifying manner, introduced by a friend, to a family in want of an instructive companion for their son with whom they were travelling, and he was now abroad with them.

The count feeling under this alleviation comparatively rich, had moved from a small ready-furnished abode, and had taken a house, very much out of repair, but of a certain appearance: it stood conspicuous—it had that interval between the gate and the door, on which so many small tenants rest their dignity—it had its hall;—and a stair-case, rather better than might have been looked for, led from parlours denominated variously, according to their supposed purposes, up to a spacious drawing-room, connecting with his sleeping-room, and that devoted to his toilette. The house was decorated with the shreds of former grandeur—maps and views of estates, ‘now to *the mob* gone down,’ called for the sighs and sympathy of his visitors, while his furniture, which he

purchased as opportunity presented the various articles, seemed, like that at a cabinet-maker's show-room, to exhibit individual specimens of an unseen abundance. Superfluous finery called the eye from the deficiency of necessities; and the material of any article seemed, by its costliness, to give a reason why there were no more.—But in all this pitiable and respectable penury, he abated nothing of what was due to himself. His one maid and his unliveried footboy never omitted the ‘Milord,’ which he demanded; and he ordered his crazy one-horse chaise, with the same air as he would have used in commanding the attendance of his equipage when in Paris.

It was soon perceptible to Lady Lynford's sagacity, that here was something in her power; and she eagerly fostered an intimacy that might enable her to indulge her increasing wish for self-approbation. She had nothing to fear from scandal: the count was too highly respected to subject her even to private raillery. If any sentiment was expressed, it must have been that of a good-natured rejoicing, that two persons so circumstanced, had come within the orbit of each other's influence. To half-hour visits in a morning, succeeded invitations to dine with the baroness; and when the winter approached, Count Broderaye found himself always welcome at her table, whenever he was without any other invitation.

The benefit was indeed reciprocal ; and if the count left home for two or three days, the baroness felt the evils of her situation weigh more heavily on her spirits. He was no philosopher : he did not draw his spirit of resignation even from the best sources in his power, but he afforded an example of the practical possibility of endurance. She saw new disasters, which struck his mind, at one moment, almost with an overwhelming force, presently counteracted by the natural buoyancy of a French mind. He would entreat her to come to him ; something had occurred which made it improper for him to be seen out of his house, and under which he wanted her to console him. She would go instantly. She found him perhaps dressed in his mourning : he told her of the death of a near relation, and intimated that it *must*, for some time, derange all his plans : she would then, in pure kind-heartedness, devise the means of making his privations and restrictions less grievous : she would put by every thing, for the purpose of devoting herself to his comfort—and in her third daily visit to him, she would meet him briskly walking to her house, out of mourning, and wearing so little the appearance of his former depression, that she felt interdicted from the mention of it or any allusion to it ; and again their intercourse went on, as if nothing disastrous

had happened. All this she soon understood, and could smile at it, without any abatement of her sympathetic interest.

To render herself still more capable of profiting by a friendship so agreeable and so useful, was a stimulus to her industry that gave occupation to her hours when alone. She could do nothing moderately: attracted by subjects before her, and driven by repeated pangs from those which of themselves took possession of her thoughts, she found her best resource in intense application; and though this was not without its infliction of pain, when she recollected 'dear Meryon's' concern for her improvement, yet there was a solid satisfaction and a feeling approaching to virtuous, in living up to what she supposed he must approve. She would rise from books with which the count had furnished her from the wreck of his fine library, jaded and nervous; and if she passed the mirror which she had placed to reflect the lovely prospect, she was shocked at her looks, and felt more ill for knowing she looked so—tears of self-commiseration would come into her eyes:—she wiped them away, and said, 'At least I am doing my best *now*.'—Any one must have pitied her, however she had subjected herself to blame.

The count heard so little, at this time, of what

was passing amongst London lords and ladies, that the baroness was under no necessity of coming to any explanations. He knew the world, and had lived amongst persons who were not apt to be their own biographers. Besides this, he was himself a great talker—a feature of character that dispenses very much with the narrations of others. The intercourse which Lady Lynford accepted with the neighbourhood, was at first of the most distant kind of civility; and she was very circumspect in keeping up whatever formed a barrier against inquisitiveness. But her caution in her own concerns never operated seriously against others; and as she grew acquainted with those amongst whom she had settled herself, her heart expanded to their little interests; and, descending from the elevated distance at which she had done good in her native place, no one could be more attentive to distress—no one could, with more good sense or warmer feeling, relieve want or soothe misery. What she did, was done with propriety and decorum, not with the blind enthusiasm that neutralizes a deed of benevolence by the temptation it holds out to ingratitude. With the winter came much want among the poor; and Count Broderaye's humanity found its resource in her liberality: he had his sympathetic *petitesse* of feeling.—In summer, a little surprising *fête* for the

village-children, delighted his imagination in cheap contrivance; and in winter, he was rather more apt to feel for a want of sauce to meat than of meat itself: he was charmed with scenic poverty:—a truckle-bed with a young girl dying on it, especially if her fine hair had strayed from the shelter of her night-cap—heart-breaking as the reality is!—would hold his powers of description in employ that seemed the indulgence of agreeable ideas—till some other object came in sight:—while a broken leg to a waggoner, occurring in a plain way, or a bricklayer falling from the top of a house, called out little more than reproaches on the inefficiency of English laws, or a humorous description of the headlong descent of '*le pauvre diable*.'

'This good amiable Frenchman,' said Lady Lynford to herself, 'does not give the balance of his understanding time to settle its preponderance. He must not guide mine too far, or he will lead me into error. There is much that is right and admirable in him, that I can imitate:—his submission to calamity—his accommodation of his ends to his means—are, alas! points in which I may soon need his example;—but my sympathy with sufferers must not depend on embellishments, nor must I make little dramas out of homely incidents.'

Yet these very errors in her friend were of use to her, as all things may be made by proper consideration ; and to consideration she was growing prone, under abundant leisure and the want of stimulus in this wholesome retirement, where she was every day displacing from her character something not worthy of it, and substituting something that proved her good taste in morals.

At the end of twelve months, she was established in a mode of life that might have been envied. She had had no disquiet from those whom she dreaded ; and, having, without feeling that she was doing what Lord Winchmore had advised, brought herself to live within the compass of her penal income, not suffering herself to contract a debt, methodizing every article of expense, giving way to no self-indulgence, constant in her religious duties, and omitting no point of moral obligation which presented itself to her conscience, she had been by necessity thrown into a course of life which her own short experience, her reading and her excellent good-sense, told her, it had been well to have made the basis of that of her original choice. By communication with her banker, she had got about her, her books, musical instruments, and whatever her town-house contained of means of employment ; and though cut off thus from the world and keeping up no correspondence, she

never felt the want of society or amusement. Her servants whom she had brought, turned out valuable—those she hired, gave her no trouble. Could she have heard from Lord Winchmore, she would have been less anxious—and had she never married, or married wisely, she would have had little cause for regret. But there were still bitter moments in her hours; and now that blessings had become rare, she could not but look back with a feeling of penitence, on the small value which she had once set on things now out of her reach, and not to be purchased with ten times what she now considered as her income. ‘Is it,’ said she to herself, ‘only when we are planted out, that we call to mind the loveliness of a precluded landscape? Are we never inclined to pay homage to the sun and moon,—are their benefits never confessed but when setting or eclipsed?’

Count Broderaye did not make the baroness’s reposing any confidence in him, a condition on which his was granted. In the hours they passed together, she had heard the history of his time, and much of his own biography; and she might, from this information, have thrown light on some passages of French history, to understand which, posterity may need a commentary. He was an elegantly accomplished man, though in a frivo-

lous way ; he drew delicately, and taught her to do many pretty handy-works—in all his instructions, and indeed into every thing that flowed from his mind, a recollection of his son, whom, as being named Maximilian, he always called ‘ *mon bon petit Max*,’ insinuated itself ; and now that his absence was drawing to a close, and every letter was dated from a nearer place, his parent’s longing expectations were wound up to a degree that excited a kindred interest in the mind of Lady Lynford ; and in contemplating this effect on the count, she was almost led to wish that she too had some one to care for.

But with all this cause to rejoice in the merit and profitable talents of his son, he was very earnest to impress on the baroness, the care he had taken of the family-honour : ‘ *le bon petit Max*’ —‘ his good little boy ’—had consented to drop his name in taking a stipendiary situation ; and such was his scrupulosity on the subject, even to his friend, that he did not reveal, lest he might subsequently be identified, the appellation by which ‘ *le bon petit Max*’ had engaged himself in this service.

There had been perhaps a time, and not very long past, when Lady Lynford’s ears would have been wearied with the repetition of a doting father’s expressions of impatience ;—and, a little mis-led

by the terms of endearment in which the count spoke of his son, her lively talent for sarcastic ridicule might have humorously predicted the scene to be imagined when he should receive this darling; but every thing at which 'dear Meryon' would have shaken his head, was wearing out of her inclinations; and she entered most kindly into feelings expressed to her by the father, and those conveyed in the letters of the son;—and when the answer to a message of inquiry, told her that the young man was safe in the count's house, she felt as if some wish of her own had been accomplished, —some anxiety of her own ended.

Having previously learnt that the young gentleman was to be received as Mr. Broderaye, she made her reception of him in her very best manner, and that manner was calculated to show an interest in his safe arrival, founded on her regard for his parent. The count, garrulous and fidgetty, looked at her and at him, as if desirous to know that he obtained her approbation; and then shaking his grey hairs, as if he had hoped too much, he gave her to understand that '*le bon petit Max*'—his '*bon fils*'—his '*cher enfant*'—so dear to 'his dear pap-pa'—was not, by some degrees, so commendable as when he had parted from him three years before. He intimated that what he had gained in experience, he had lost in

fresh ; and any one not acquainted with French feelings, might very excusably have supposed that ‘ *le pauvre petit Max*,’ who, by the way, wanted little of six feet in height, had brought with him, and communicated to his father, a certificate of the impossibility of his living twelve months.

The young man did not, indeed, look in robust health ; but his visage was one of those which seem formed into expression by the action of mind, and which easily give way to every fresh influence—it was rather long and contemplative than ‘ round and unthinking ;’ and it had, spread over it, what the baroness had never observed in any of those whom she had admired or who had admired her, a brown shade connecting with dark hair inclined to curl, and dark eyes very becomingly fringed, which, though his own complexion seemed as if, when in health, clear, and rather fair, gave it a very respectable cast of the *sombre*, and obtained for him a sort of deference and consideration, which his youth could not otherwise have claimed.

His joy in returning to his father, his pleasure in finding him living so much to his own satisfaction, and his gratitude to the baroness for the many attentions paid him, could not be questioned ; and as he met all observations on his looks, with playful assurances that he had only suffered by the pleasure of travelling, it was to be hoped that, his

fatigue once over, there would be left no cause for anxiety. Lady Lynford put on a confidence, not perfectly sincere, at the first private interview with his father, and she won whatever remained for him to give of his fondest admiration, when she acknowledged the importance of the question, and in pledging herself for Mr. Broderaye's speedy recovery of his looks, said, that any harm happening to this '*bon petit enfant*,' would be a calamity for which poets and sculptors make angels weep. The count took the compliment, and kissed her hand.

Maximilian de Broderaye had, very early in life, found out that this world is not a play-ground of complete indulgence, to little boys whose fathers are not wealthy; and this timely discovery had very much contributed to form, or to cool, his character. The young gentleman, but for this, might have led himself into gratifications, as little prudent as his father's fine buildings and costly stable-establishments. *His*, indeed, were somewhat different in kind, but quite as seductive and more paralysing—the rostrum, the bay, the lyre, the chisel, and the palette, had him for their worshipping votary; and there was a tendency in that which gave pulsation to his veins, that would not have been diminished by the indulgence of these tastes. —But his early and intimate acquaintance with the

situation of his father, was a code and a manual to him; and having been indulged in his wish for the profession on which he was now about to enter, he conceived it his duty to make its demands his monitors, and the measure of every thing in which he had an option, his father's interest in his decision. —He was come home comparatively rich; and, that he was inclined to make the most conscientious use of this circumstance, was soon evident in alterations, improvements, and additions in the count's dwelling.

While absent, he had been on fairy-ground: he had lived in affluence with persons who highly valued him, and no young man ever stood a better chance of being rendered unfit to return, with complacency, to his very limited comforts; but most fortunately, having been made aware, at the moment when he was quitting his indulgences, of a sad mistake into which he had, in common with many other young men in the course of this odd world, been led by the affectionate incaution of a father and mother, who had a pretty daughter, a few years younger than himself, he had come home, not only with alacrity, but with a feeling of refuge from something still less tolerable than the deficiencies of his father's house. The affair was entirely at an end; and he had only to reconcile himself to its termination: he had lost nothing in

regard: he was convinced that a father with an estate entailed on a son, and affording only a slender provision for a daughter, was justified in accepting a great offer for that daughter:—nor even, if he had borne the grievance in mind a few months longer, when a cold spring in England took off the young man and enriched the daughter with his wealth, would he have thought that, with less precipitation on the part of the parent, he might have been successful. Such an inheritance might have been justly deemed an obstacle as insurmountable as that to which he had yielded his pretensions.

Nothing unconnected with her own affairs, could have been so gratifying to the baroness as the addition of Mr. Broderaye to the society of her situation, and more particularly to the intimacy which, with the highest and most visible decorum, she cultivated with his father. Her caution, which pride or self-respect dictated, was as exculpatory as it was prudent—it saved her from all danger of countenancing relaxation in female conduct amongst the lower orders, and it tended to preserve to her this great comfort, by leaving nothing to be said that could awe her into the sacrifice of it. Early in their intercourse she courageously settled all these points with the count; and doing credit to her countrymen by claiming for herself as an Englishwoman, peculiar allow-

ances, she secured herself by the perfect openness of her conduct. She never denied herself to the visits of her neighbours—a very few steps brought in any one from the door of her house to the room in which she sate—all her employments were obvious and respectable, and if those who came in, could be interested by them, she could be communicative. She had the clergyman's little girls to spend a day with her frequently, without suffering them to interfere with her occupation, or to hinder her conversation with Count Broderaye, who, proud of his English, accidentally consulted her convenience by making himself and his notes, which she never permitted him to close, in some measure intelligible to the servants. If she made confidential exceptions in favour of any one who visited her, it was in that of the clergyman, a plain worthy man, who often guided her charities, and in whose experience of the lower orders of human nature, she found information that made her a very willing auditor of his 'simple annals.'

To those around her, she appeared a suffering angel. Every action was good; and the natural energy of her character made her actions frequent. Too lofty in mind to enter into the concerns of those beneath her,—if they were obtruded on her, she maintained a dignified silence, which procured for her, however imperfectly understood, the en-

comiums generally bestowed on those who say nothing. If a deed of goodness was reported to her, she answered by a warm feeling of the value of it, but without attaching her praise to the individual; therefore she excited no envy or jealousy. If a spirit of detraction forced upon her ear the misconduct of any one, she stood no less aloof; and no one could get her beyond a polite forbearance of forming any judgment where, of two persons concerned, but one was represented. It is almost superfluous to add, that her ladyship had a way of doing this, which prevented repetition.

Her justice, her charity, her regularity conciliated the esteem of the neighbourhood. She was quoted as an example of every virtue; and even her affability and condescension—points in which she did *not* shine—were extolled by those admitted to her—perhaps with as much truth and the same view, as prompt a farmer's daughter, admitted to a Christmas-dance at my lord duke's, to brag of 'the games of romps which she used to have with his grace's daughters.' By the better sort she was loved, as much as they dared, for that which they saw, and pitied at random for that which they could only surmise. Fortunately for her, no new edition of the Peerage was published. But there was, as yet, in the mind of the baroness, very little wisdom, beyond natural instinct and worldly pru-

dence. It was consentaneous to her sex and temper to do good, and to her youthful time of life to do, with laudable activity, whatever it was agreeable to her to do :—but she was bribing her conscience by that which was entitled to praise, into acquiescence in that which merited reprehension ; and it was care to preserve every thing so balanced as to preclude remark, that formed the basis of her equanimity. She was kept right by the proximate fear of being known to have been wrong. The questions that decided her actions, were in general, ‘ What *may* I do ? ’ and ‘ What is it prudent in *me* to do ? ’

Yet the ‘ still small voice,’ whose whispers make themselves so distinctly heard, was not entirely silenced. She was not far off from wholesome feeling when a suffusion passed over her cheek, on some recollections, or a pungent sense of something that did not stay to be named, darted through her bosom, on hearing of great sacrifices made to integrity. From these uneasy visitations, she would start away to an active employment, and would seek for some good to be done, to save her from recollecting the evil into which her self-confidence had betrayed her. Under these peculiar circumstances of mind, what may be called, if the expression may be allowed, the recipient situation

of the count, and the contributory arrival of his son, were convenient and valuable.

It was not Mr. Broderaye's plan to remain with his father. He had arrived when it was vacation at Oxford, and till term began, he meant to enjoy the beauties of his residence. This afforded an interval of a few weeks, during which these three persons seemed, or feigned, to have forgotten former disquietudes. It could not be expected that Mr. Broderaye's politeness should extinguish his curiosity on finding a lady with the baroness's high pretensions, so situated. He referred to the Peerage, which he found recording her only as presumptive heir to the barony of the then existing Earl of Lynford: he questioned his father, who answered more by gesture than speech, and thus left to himself, he was at liberty to attach something extraordinary to such an untimely seclusion, to collect from her countenance that she was unhappy, and to feel his humanity and gratitude interested in consoling what he could not clearly understand.

CHAPTER X.

BUT now the autumnal season of the university-associations came on, and the count must renounce his pleasure in having his son with him ;—but no weakness of regret was to be discovered in the old man's countenance or language. His child's advantage had been, through the whole period of his existence, his first consideration ; and he had so often parted from him, that his being with him was rather the exception to custom than in itself habit. Nothing scenic or frivolous could find place where Max's interests were concerned : had he succeeded in making him accept the army as his profession, he would have bidden him ' Hark ! for the trumpet calls,' with perfect firmness ; and perhaps he might recollect, in spite of his mortification, his comparative happiness in dismissing him to a college rather than to a field of battle, when he shook hands with him on parting.

But very differently did the baroness undergo this subtraction from her limited enjoyments : it was, to her, the relinquishing half of all she possessed—and that, alas ! the better half.—She who was so reconciled to solitude and privacy, she who

had had fortitude enough to make almost an agreeable task of submission to narrowed circumstances ; she who had been thankful, was, immediately as Mr. Broderaye was withdrawn, as restless and discontented as when seeking an asylum under the oppression of recent misfortune. She would not give her mind time to come down to its average-feeling : she was wretchedly dejected ; and no experience, no assurance, no reference, could enable her to persuade herself that she should ever be less so than she was.

The consequence of such hasty determination to be miserable, was the annealing into her mind that of which it was her prudence to rid herself ; and not caring to disgrace herself with the count, by the confession that she could not imitate him, she nourished in secret this regret, till, like all other predilections, it was overpowering her. In a regular mode of life, surrounded by her equals, and free to bestow her favour, Mr. Broderaye might have been distinguished amongst those whom she *patronized*, on account of his superior birth, his family-misfortunes, his elegance, and his acquirements : she might have loved his temper ; and, if he had married, and been her neighbour, she might have cultivated particular intimacy without being sensible to her own condescension : she might have found in the woman he

had made Mrs. Broderaye, a friend peculiarly well adapted to receive and do credit to her generosity—she might have stood god-mother to a host of little Broderayes; and all would have been decorous and well—but Lady Lynford never would have thought of falling in love with Count Broderaye's '*bon petit Max*,' without some directing inducement—his profession would have had no attraction for her—his very name of baptism would have been an obstacle, and the features of his character would have cost her too minute a *perquisition* for the impetuosity of her decisions to endure.—And this same refutation may, nine times in ten, be given to the hasty supposition and justifying assertions of the headlong professors of invincible passion, which must be very genuine indeed—and then deserves a more creditable name than passion—if it does not owe its existence to some adventitious circumstance, which removed, would remove it.

But, while this is asserted as detracting from her claim to perfect acquaintance with her own heart, all due apology must be made for her forlorn condition. Whatever rank of life the baroness had been in, while she retained her identity she would have been found free from all taint of indelicacy. She had been in effect cruelly neglected and mis-led in her years of rearing—at first,

committed to a powerless hand made oppressive by ignorance and obstinacy, and then to minds selfish, crafty, and disposed to sacrifice her to their interests; but had her education been directed by a sensible father, and her character trusted to the moulding of a well-bred sensible woman, adequate to the task, Lady Heraline Beltravers would have been a blessing to a parent: she would have married early and well: she would have been the pride of any husband, and would have fulfilled every duty of her station in life satisfactorily; but warped as she had been, almost at her first foot-step in life, out of the right line that ought to have been marked out for her, her errors were entitled to allowance and called for pity; and some credit was due to the efficacy of that accidental light afforded her, when Goody Parr, having nothing of her own to bring forward, sent her young ladyship to the Scriptures for instruction. Our Lady Lynford, with all her faults, must not be degraded to a comparison with the intriguing class of her sex, who lead in the world of fashion, when they ought to be placarded, like a deceitful pond by the road-side—‘Dangerous.’

It was not unpardonable to feel a prophetic interest in a son, so described by a father for whom she had already so interested herself—it was not an impeachment of her taste or judgment,

to admire one so gifted, so entitled to good opinion, as Mr. Broderaye: the suspicion of ill health or a mind ill at ease, called out additional feeling of concern—she was grateful to his powers of cheering her solitude and of saving her from meeting herself. And the natural generosity of her character would not let her be insensible to the recollection, that had she but remained unmarried, she might have been the mean of restoring to something like his lost fortunes, a young man who, with them, had lost none of his pretensions. To have made the old count happy, would have been in itself worth some trouble; and to have made him so through his son, would have paid for any sacrifice:—in short, her ladyship, when she called all these circumstances to mind, was in the situation of some inexperienced whist-players, who, having lost every thing that the cards promised, have only to say, ‘What a fine hand I held, if I had but known how to play it!’

All this was aggravated by her intimate acquaintance with circumstances as they now stood. Max’s father had only a life-income, and Max himself had, for patrimony, his talents and his education. His prospects were tutorship, ordination at the ensuing Easter, and probably a curacy, till protracted celibacy and the privilege of out-living contemporaries and perhaps friends, should

land him in a situation not affording much, probably, above the necessities of life.—It was too vexatious to be thought on with any moderate sentiment by a young woman with apparently so much in her power and in reality so little.

If Lady Lynford had been really in genuine love with Maximilian, she would instantly have turned in her mind the feasibility of divesting herself of all of which she could be divested, and waiting to satisfy herself of the influence she might acquire over his heart; for still, as Lord Winchmore had told her, she was rich; but this was a thought too sure of rejection, to intrude: she therefore contented herself with fruitless wishes and unavailing regret; and forgetting that she had at this moment no more substantial cause of complaint than before she saw him, she relaxed her wholesome industry, lost again the flesh she had been for some months recovering; and had the count's eyes been as open to the alteration observable in her, as to that which he had before discovered in his son, he might have feared for the existence of that portion of his comforts which depended on the baroness; but he was happy under the certainty that Max had suffered only by fatigue; and if he saw his kind friend droop, he endeavoured to persuade her that she was fanciful.

There seemed now a probability that these

two neighbours, accidentally as they had met, might pass the rest of the life of one of them together. What tidings were gained of Lord and Lady Winchmore only went to confirm the reports already in circulation that they were detained prisoners. Lady Lynford's banker, in corresponding with her, informed her of the state of her property, and received her orders, which he forwarded to her steward. There was nothing to be done but to prevent detriment; and she had no cause to complain of the manner in which she was served. Her banker was a native of a village not far from St. Emeril's, and in his journeys to visit friends, included an inspection of her estate: he was faithful to his promise of secrecy, and from him she heard quite as much as she wished to know, of the proceedings of her deserted village and its vicinity.

With Christmas Mr. Broderaye and her cheerfulness returned; and, now that intimacy was, as it were, rivetted by this renewal of acquaintance, and '*le bon petit Max*' seemed quite at ease, and at leisure to fall in love, it was very unlikely that he would let pass so fair an opportunity; but the baroness had little ground for flattering herself: he was too unreserved with her, at all times, to leave a hope that he had any thing more to say; and a hint which his father, in an unguard-

ed moment, gave, of the small effort required to make him fancy himself blest with a daughter as well as a son, was received by Mr. Broderaye in a way that obliged Lady Lynford, for her pride's sake, to join with him in reprobating it, and conveyed to both her and his father, the painful persuasion that a repetition of the indiscretion would be equivalent to a command to absent himself. The manner of this repulsion increased her respect; but it diminished her hopes.

At Easter, he was ordained; and, at the first opportunity, came to show himself in his new character to his parent.—It was forbearance in the count, not to tell him, when he saw him drest on the Sunday to do the duty of the little parish-church, that he would rather have seen him in a military uniform; but he was repaid for it by the admiration of the villagers after the service, and the universal acknowledgment of obligation to Mr. Broderaye for the honour done to the parish. He thought his sermon rather too long; for it lasted twenty-three minutes; and the old gentleman had, for the last seven, looked up at the pulpit as if he was impatient of this separation, and longing to cry out, ‘Do pray, *mon bon petit Max*, come down:’—he never pined for him when fifty miles off; but when in sight, the pulpit was

a prison from which he would have been glad to release him.

A little time served to bring to more moderate terms, Lady Lynford's last new disposition to injure her precarious peace, and becoming habituated, by the end of the summer-vacation, to his presence and absence, which his clerical duty now rendered less regular, she saw him come and go with less expense of feeling, though with views and wishes unchanged. His second ordination took place: he was successful in his plans: his friends were active for him, and he kept his father free from painful anxiety by proving to him that 'his brains,' as he said, 'paid for their keep,' and holding out hopes that 'every year would enable him, still more efficiently, to pay interest for the debt he had incurred, and never could discharge even with ten times its amount, to his parental goodness.'

He and his father were absent when the baroness received a packet from her banker inclosing what she never wished to see, a west-country news-paper. The envelope contained a few lines; and these she had no aversion to read, at least, till they connected themselves with the news-paper, the very first inevitable sight of which presented names of places now unjustly hated, in proportion to the affection which she once bore them.

The sentence explanatory of the news-paper, expressed regret at what it was supposed would give her some pain in reading. Such warnings seldom deter curiosity: she read to the end; and then falling on her knees in an ecstasy of feeling that could be understood by no one but herself, she uttered the words, 'Thank God, thank God!—my misfortunes will be over—I shall yet be happy—it is almost a miracle in my favour—thank God, thank God!'

Any body well acquainted with the situation of the baroness's affairs, might have conjectured the truth, that Mr. Bray was, to the comfort of his wife and the joy of his parish, dead—and those intimate with him and his habit of riding home in the dark, and his natural defect of an extremely short sight, would guess accurately that in the certainty that he must know better than his horse, he had compelled the poor animal to go on one side of a rail when it was inclined to take the other, and having proceeded some yards on a fair path, which he had often travelled at all hours, had arrived at a spot where the cliff, by falling down, had left the supports of the rail at the edge of the precipice. All the how, where, and when, which the printed paper recorded, and which the baroness, when sure of the fact, took the trouble

to read, was nothing to the purpose ; the event was the same, let it happen as it might.

It was almost impossible, in this tumultuous gust of novel happiness, to ascertain what perception had precedence in her mind : that which was the most important to her, was, that there now existed no witness of her marriage worth regarding. Miss Wyerley had indeed married Mr. George Bray, the man of law, who had been employed to frame the substitute for a regular marriage-settlement, and who had acted as her father at the altar ; but he and she were gone to the West Indies, where he had relapsed into an early predilection for a seaman's life.—The decrepitude of the parish-clerk was remembered as equal to a certificate of his safe lodgment in the churchyard ; and what the colonel had hinted, went very far towards an assurance that the parish-register would never appear against her. Of the now widow Bray, she was as sure as of herself.

The concern scarcely a shade off this, respected ‘ *le bon petit Max* :’—the vicarage of St. Emeril's, *at least*, was at his service—and, when let into the astonishing truths she had to reveal, it was not very likely that this should bound his wishes.

Any thing that was imprudent—any thing that might have made, even the felicity she was now

contemplating with rapture, the most wounding deception of her life, might have been predicted, as the probable conduct of a still very young woman so systematically taught to consider herself exempted from all control, and so inclined to appreciate her own condescensions ; but, what in itself was delicacy, and, in her, combined with pride, was her protection ; and, whatever her anxiety to ascertain her chance for restored happiness—whatever her generous desire to do good and to give pleasure to the uttermost, it required no victory, for it cost no struggle, to determine, on her knowledge of Maximilian Broderaye, that, to win him, she must, in the most correct, as well as the most exalted way, consider herself.

Towards such a man it was virtuous to have overlooked those circumstances which have been stated as probably adverse to any spontaneous attachment on her part, in a less directing situation. In referring ideally to Mr. Meryon's probable opinion, she was confident, and she did not err in being so, that her guardian would have espoused Mr. Broderaye's cause, and have rejoiced to bestow her upon him, in consideration of his high descent, and entering sincerely into her satisfaction in this disposal of her wealth. She knew that his present situation would have been no obstacle to his consent : he would have been

pleased to see a deserving son of the church possessed of such large means of bounty ; and in person, manners, talents, sound sense, cool judgment, principles, and temper, she was satisfied he would have said she had nothing to wish improved or altered.

She could interrogate herself now much more closely than in the instance of Colonel Wauston, as to the motives to which she was yielding. Every principle that induced her was good—it was a passion, if, alas ! it were a passion, made up of laudable feelings ; and it was hardly probable that it should be disappointed.—What to do, indeed, in the article of truth and candour—whether she should risque all by her frank avowal, or trust to the improbability of his ever hearing how she had involved herself, she could not decide.—Every particular but that of her husband's birth-place, she, indeed, meant to reveal—and for the revelation of that, she did not see any immediate necessity.

To live free from apprehension, seemed at last within her hopes ; and even a return to St. Eméril's was not a thought that called for instant rejection. To place a son at ease, and in a situation that would allow him to watch over the declining years of his venerable father, was delight in contemplation—it was grand good—it

was munificent liberality ; and for these she had a high relish.

To carry into effect these laudable intentions, was her immediate resolution, without admitting any contingency to interfere. Whatever related to herself, she thought she might fairly trust, to—she scarcely knew what, but, most probably, her own influence ;—and, but for the one unfortunate fact, every body must have wished success to an attachment so well founded, and so decorously controlled.

She stood firmly, even some mortification, when, the count returning without his son from a short absence, she made it her first business to communicate her good intentions, and to explain as much of her situation as she thought fit to reveal : this included not, at present, her marriage ; but she expressed herself inclined to resume her natural prerogatives, and requested the old gentleman, in her name, to make an offer to Mr. Broderaye of the vicarage of St. Emeril's, with her regrets that it was not more worthy his acceptance, and an undertaking on her part to do whatever was necessary for his comfort in it.

Her mortification consisted in the manner in which the count received this, which she supposed was decidedly great good fortune for his son. When she paused, he deliberated as if his reply

needed thought; and when he did answer, it was by a set of short queries almost affronting, as his surprise gave him the appearance of doubting whether she had that to bestow which she offered.

And even when she had removed every doubt, he weighed, rather ungraciously, the present good against the probable future. The government were, in his opinion, bound to do much for Max:—perhaps he would not have thought Durham or Winchester too high a price for his services; and many a patron would have said, at this moment, ‘Well then, try your fortune;’—but Lady Lynford was patient; and when she had induced him to take the mitres out of the scale opposed to that in which she had deposited little St. Emeril, she, with more forbearance than the old man had a right to expect, gave him till the next day to consider.

He, however, came to his wits before it was too late in that day to go to her; and he then had made up his mind ‘to do as she wished.’ But, even now, it was rather acquiescence on mature deliberation, than acceptance on a first impulse of unquestionable obligation; and the discussion ended with his recital to her, of the much more valuable benefices which *he* had once had in *his* gift. Her ladyship’s point was, however, carried;—she designed good to the father, through the

son, whom she could not suppose as torpid on the subject of a provision as the count was for him : —in quiet dignity she repeated her commission as a request, foregoing all the low egotism of dispensing with his interference—and begging Mr. Broderaye might be told, that as acknowledgments were always painful to her, his most acceptable thanks would be his being satisfied with the little she had to offer him.

CHAPTER XI.

IF ever any one was requited with prompt payment and large interest at one and the same time, it was Baroness Lynford, when Maximilian Broderaye, immediately on the receipt of his father's letter, quitted the place where it found him, and in as few hours as were requisite for the journey, stood before her, apologizing for the intrusion by referring to her prohibition of thanks which precluded him from writing, lest he might, in the impulse of his feeling, say a word more than was consistent with obedience to her commands. Instead of paying her the ill compliment of understanding that, in declining acknowledgments, she only looked for them in some choice form, he confined himself to thanks more deeply felt than ingeniously displayed; and then proceeded to show her, by a disclosure of his plans for his father's comfort, how much she had put into his power, and how necessary that power was;—but not even in this intimacy of confidential explanation, did he suffer himself to depart from the style of deportment habitual to him towards her: with admirable delicacy he ascribed to his father what he might

have taken to himself ; and he left her, not flattered, but still better pleased with the decided step she had taken. That her presentation was utterly invalid, and that it might involve Mr. Broderaye and his father, persons for whom she was so deeply interested, in the most serious inconvenience, escaped her recollection, only because she was determined not to recollect it.

No adverse accident occurred to disturb the felicity of this generous proceeding ; and, at Christmas, of the first year of his full orders, Mr. Broderaye came to take leave of his father and his friend, previous to his taking possession of his preferment. Early in the spring, it was proposed that the count and the baroness should follow him : in the mean time, he was to get St. Emeril's Court put in order for her reception, and to make his abode there, if any thing hindered his reception at the vicarage-house. He was to write immediately to inform Lady Lynford of the situation of Mrs. Bray, and various other matters : he was to seek out Annette and such other servants as she wished to have about her ; and with these and other commissions, he was ready to depart, before she had made up her mind to the unpleasant necessity of anticipating what he would probably hear in the first half-hour of his

residence at St. Emeril. She found it impossible, and he was suffered to go at the risque.

However abundant the time for consideration, every moment of it was occupied by her new prospect.—That she wished her plans not to be known, was a sufficient security to her that neither of the gentlemen would mention them.

She now waited with impatience for a letter from St. Emeril's—not that she was particularly anxious about Mrs. Bray, or any of the commissions Mr. Broderaye had accepted. She looked rather for his expressions of satisfaction on seeing where his lot was cast, his repeated assurance of his happiness, and some report of pleasure expressed by the people on hearing of her intended return. This was sufficient to render a letter from home, which a short time before would have shocked her, a very agreeable expectation; but with it came a little solicitude to discover what he had already heard, and, if any thing respecting herself, how he had accepted it.

She was not kept in needless suspense: the letter arrived; and all was yet secure—nothing had been omitted of what she had given in charge; and if silence on the subject was any proof, nothing seemed to have transpired that she wished secret: but this did not quite satisfy her: she would

rather have known that Mr. Broderaye had heard what she cared not to tell, and that he had not removed her from the place which she had occupied in his regard. Still she must wait—and she was learning to do so very decently—Mrs. Bray, she was told, had betaken herself to a friend at a distance, before his arrival. Mrs. and Miss Holby begged to remain till a more convenient season for changing residence. St. Emeril's Court was already preparing for her, with all the alacrity that those interested in her return could show. Annette was dutifully ready; and the rest of her pensioned servants, with a few exceptions occasioned by absence or marriage, held themselves at her command.

‘The pretty church,’ he said, ‘had been cruelly neglected, but wanted rather kind attention than expense: this should be his first and immediate care.’—Every expectation was more than fulfilled—every look had been pleasant—every heart seemed warm towards him. He hinted his obligation to the deceased vicar for leaving him so much more than fair advantage; and with a prophetic message to the count, of the delight he would feel when settled in the vicarage-house, he very respectfully concluded.

A few posts elapsed, and then came another letter, more nearly touching on the point of interest. It was written in admiration of the climate, to which

his patroness's consideration of him had transferred him : it anticipated the best effects on his parent's health ; and having frequently made similar communications to the baroness, he concluded with a few stanzas suggested by the contemplation of his prospect—to heighten which in representation, a little reference was made to contrasting images ; and his muse sang, rather in lover's language, of the previous frowns of adverse fate,—and spoke of rank and wealth as having stood in the way of his happiness, till something superior to both, had interposed and overpaid him.

The baroness's extreme interest for herself, not unfrequently made her appear more deficient in concern for others than in truth she was. There is a great difference between repletion which cannot bestow and emptiness which has nothing to communicate ; but as the effect may be the same, she might have been thought to want feeling or sagacity in not sympathizing with, or in not discovering, the wounded state of Maximilian Broderaye's heart. It had escaped her ; and that it had done so, might in some measure be ascribed, not merely to her pre-occupation, but to his own endeavour to heal, or to hide, its unsound state.

Nor did even his graceful stanzas inform her—they contributed to mislead her : for, ready to admit, however secretly, in all its force, every ex-

pression which she could construe in favour of her wish to be, and to make others happy, she took the lamentation to herself, translated 'rank' by *baroness*, and 'wealth' by *St. Emeril's*, and was convinced she had only to let him know his hasty error, to realize all her hopes. Three lines by the next post, and—all would have been over. To her praise be it said, an intention of writing to this purport, never found admission into her thoughts—but as she generally acted like nobody else, so did she now.

Her mind was perfectly at ease as to fact; but as its previous state had been confined to her own consciousness, so was its present. Yet her pride or her judgment told her, that under this new light, a conduct was required of her, different from what she had planned, and she wished she had not engaged herself to go to *St. Emeril's* without another meeting with *Mr. Broderaye*. She wished him not to have this certainty of seeing her in *Devonshire*; and she set herself to contrive how to turn the movement upon him.

An expedient presented itself, by which more purposes than merely that in view, might be forwarded. If she was to resume her natural situation, her town-house, imperfect as its repairs and improvements were left, needed her care; and in case of any *arrangement*, as her silent thoughts

chose to denominate an union with Mr. Broderaye, its present state would be disgracefully published. If, therefore, she could plead this necessity as a reason for going to London before the time appointed for her removal into Devonshire, she could persuade the count to go to his son when she quitted his neighbourhood: Maximilian would probably take the journey for the sake of conducting his father back: the breaking up of this little society was an interesting necessity, and the moment of *éclaircissement* might be a moment of delicate disclosure. Would Baroness Lynford ever have devised such a plan for the furtherance of her own views, if she had not been trained in the school of the De Quintes?

No opposition whatever was made to the alteration of her former purpose, when she mentioned it to the count. She expressed her wish that it had not rendered it necessary to leave him where they then were; and this, as if she had prompted him, he met by suggesting the expedient of resorting to his son, who was at this time residing in her house.

The middle of February was named for the execution of what was proposed: Lady Lynford's house in Grosvenor-square was made just decent

for her reception, while directing its embellishments: she recovered her two principal servants, and with them and those she had, she could get through the short period of her stay.

Nothing was ever better contrived or more promising. All her wishes were laws; and her imagination carried her, first to the point of time when Mr. Broderaye should be encouraged to complain *aloud* and *verbally* of Fate; and subsequently, to that when, leaving his father comfortably settled in Devonshire, he should make a hasty journey to London, find her in Grosvenor-square, and, with all the license of forms, lead her back to St. Emeril's, there to find and confess himself and his father made happy by her generosity.

Beginning now to estimate past good, by its comparative freedom from evil, she could not look back on her residence in this lovely country, without sensible regret in abandoning it; and embellished as it had been, by such valuable and interesting connexions, it was still more endeared to her. Even at a time of year which did not permit the enchanting landscapes to exert all their spells, she every hour felt it more difficult to say, 'Farewell.' She made use of her restlessness to increase it, by revisiting all those places that could most prevent her acquiescing in her own

decisions, and found them, even when skeletons, still lovely. Standing on the grand promontory of Wyndcliff, and looking down on the Wye and the Severn, now unveiled by foliage,—the one pursuing its broad straight course in dignified composure—the other, narrow, impetuous—in one spot, rushing forward—in another, meandering with frequent retrogradation—peeping here, shining there, as the clouds pass over it—now skulking behind eminences—now avowing itself in low meadows—fantastic, coy, playful—but always attractive—and at last, when within a certain approximation of the master-stream now benignly bending towards it, assuming a more straight and determined channel till distinction is lost in union!—she could not, in contemplating this emblematic scenery, but wish it typical of her fate.—She was willing to acknowledge any dissimilarity unfavourable to herself, between the sinuosities of the tributary stream, and her own past aberrations—but she saw a fate which she wished her own—and, to her surprise, found that her tears regretted for her that it was not.

She turned away, and as she walked towards her carriage, told herself how pretty what she had been surveying, would appear in an Italian sonnet : Maximilian wrote many ; and she pleased herself with the intention of offering him this hint of a playful coquetry. The count was with her, but she

felt no inclination to rouse *his* poetic ideas: he did not share or even understand her enthusiasm. When she admired, he drew up his cynic nose, and quoting one of Goldoni's lively comedies, with which his son, to the old man's great delight, had brought him acquainted, he said in justification of his apathy, '*Tutto il mondo è paese, e per tutto si sta bene, quando s' ha dei quattrini in tasca, e dell' allegria in cuore.*'

'Where did you find that barbarous sentiment?' said her ladyship.

'O! it is in the "*Vedova scaltra*,"' he replied—"the Cunning Widow," I suppose, they would call it here.'

So important are looks, that if the count had, even accidentally, directed his to, or removed them from the baroness, the friendship of these two persons might have been at an end in this moment. She was not protected from the wound by any insensibility in herself: she understood him to say by his quotation, in defence of his own indisposition to take root, that 'every place is his own country, to a man with pence in his pocket, and no care in his heart'—and at this she could only have smiled as the effusion of a light brain—but the *vedova scaltra*, the cunning widow, came home to her own consciousness, as peculiarly applicable to her present proceedings;—and could

the smallest supposition of detection have been entertained, in addition to the mortification of subscribing to the accidental resemblance, the sense of indignity must have overpowered every other.

Made almost malignant towards herself, by seeing to what she was reduced in her own ideas, she smiled with bitter contempt when she recollected her intention of prompting Maximilian to embody her fancy in a sonnet. She felt thankful as for danger escaped ; and no consideration could now have prevailed on her to indulge in the innocent scheme she had planned when under the influence of poetical objects.

Once released from this spasm of the mind, and convinced by his subsequent conversation that the allusion was accidental, she recovered herself, and proceeded as before, in her preparations ; and was looking for some communication from the count as to his movements, when the next morning he accidentally, and rather earlier than usual, called in on her.

‘ A very raw unpleasant morning,’ said he.

‘ It is so,’ she replied ; ‘ but you will have none such, my dear Sir, in Devonshire—you will fancy yourself in your own climate.’

‘ I shall be glad then to be there, if many such

mornings as these are to come—I don't like them:—but I have been thinking, my lady, that there is no occasion to make my *pauvre petit Max* come this journey to fetch *me*.'

'Will you then, my dear Sir, go to town with me, and let him meet you in Grosvenor-square? my house there is at your service—it is not in order, but you would not perhaps be very fastidious.'

The baroness had reason to hope that she had given way sufficiently to secure herself from being farther thwarted—and the little inconvenience of burdening herself with the old man was nothing, compared to the probable gain.—One place might be as propitious as another to the *éclaircissement* to which her views were directed. The count acceded; and she had accommodated herself to this plan, when he told her, on seeing her again, that he should not stay in that cold place any longer: he wanted nobody to travel with him: he should pack up his goods and whatever he had to move, in the next two days, and should then set off to his son, to whom he had already written signifying his intentions.

Versatile as the old gentleman was, when his plans were of his own contrivance no one could be firmer against influence opposed to them: the baroness could do nothing by representation or

persuasion : she was compelled to let him go his own way ; and his preparations were too forward to admit of her departing from hers. The disappointment was vexatious, as it took from her the contingency on which principally she had erected her aërial castles,—but she had no resource : she must again wait, and hope, and trust—and after all this, and her own frustrated speculations, she must go to him whom she had wished to come to her.

It would have been too much out of rule to suffer herself in any way to be influenced by the count's vagaries :—she saw him depart ; and then, reduced to domestic solitude, she was impatient for her own departure. Her journey to town was not as productive of buoyant ideas as it might have been, —regrets were bitter and adieus painful ; but still there was little subtracted from the real good of her situation : nothing was decided *against* her.

Arrived in London, she needed all the support that she had missed, to sustain her on entering her house. It was Pompeii or Herculaneum ! —the grave of existing remembrances, the desolate cenotaph of evaporated enjoyment ! Shyness of society again overspread her mind ; she found herself compelled, in some measure, to explain or palliate to her servants who returned to her,

her wild absence; and the difficulty which she felt in this, convinced her that she could not endure the questions or looks of her former acquaintance. Her first business was to inquire for news of Lord and Lady Winchmore: she could only learn that they existed in captivity, and had a child: the hope of better tidings, though not sanguine, it was painful to her to abandon entirely; and either her feeling of desolation, or some counteracting attraction, made her repent that she had come to London. To stay in it she had no inclination—it was full, and she dreaded any recognition. Having therefore given the directions necessary for putting her house into such a state as to render it habitable, and yet with room left for the exercise of a taste which she knew superior to her own, she was compelled to accelerate her movements; and hearing nothing from Devonshire but expressions of satisfaction and gratitude, knowing only that the count had arrived safe and was highly pleased, and that his son was happy,—without even the consolation of suspecting any thing in *her* power wanting to his happiness, she was under the necessity of taking her journey by herself, and of returning to St. Emeril's under the simple guidance of her own will.

CHAPTER XII.

THE return to St. Emeril's after such an absence, was hardly to be called relief from the painful feelings which had driven Lady Lynford from London. She left a respectable establishment in her town-house, in the hope that events might give her the fortitude necessary to return to it in comfort; and some doubts had arisen in her mind as to the disposal of her servants, who had lived with her during her absence. The habit of concealment was become so congenial to her, that she sometimes forgot the advantage of an open behaviour; but in the present instance, it occurred to her memory, and submitted itself to her judgment, in time to allow her to see that in finding situations for the respectable married couple, whom her banker had engaged for her, she insured to herself two partisans, and placed herself less at the mercy of those who knew more of her. On this measure she therefore decided, still feeling it impossible by any anticipation to blunt the edge of censure of her conduct.

With as much privacy as consisted with her intention of resuming her station at St. Emeril's in

all its dignity and grace, she quitted London—her equipage and attendance in as good style as an expeditious journey would admit of: her banker had given her his best assistance; and a new carriage carefully packed up, four very fine carriage-horses and their drivers, two saddle-horses for the out-riders, new liveries, and every thing that could speak well for her, awaited her at the last stage—the spot where she had so bitterly felt the dread of ‘dear Meryon’s’ mild reproaches.

To this rendezvous with her suite, she suffered her female-attendant to accompany her, in her travelling post-chaise. She there alighted at the inn, drest, got into her new carriage alone, leaving the other to follow with her courier and his wife—and, when setting off, and leaving a crowd of bare-headed well-wishers at the inn-door, she resolved not to recollect the feelings of her former journey:—it was not easy to forget; but she thought on the old count and the new vicar, and she told herself that dear Meryon’s certain approbation should be the test to which she would, in fancy, carry every action of her life.

All that she might have expected, and which had failed her expectations on the former occasion, was now in profusion afforded her. The time of year was the middle of April, the season

was forward, the weather enchanting—she did not listen in vain for the bells—she did not look in vain for neighbours to bid her welcome: she was met at a considerable distance, by ‘*le bon petit Max*’ on horseback, his father on a low poney—rather a grotesque figure,—and troops of all the descriptions of persons composing the population of the place. Flowers, ribbons, handkerchiefs, decked every body, while the boys shouting, and the girls carolling, ran from side to side of the carriage, to see what it was they were to greet, or to make their greeting visible.—It was impossible, in such a moment, to remember any thing unpleasant; and surely he must have known very little of the price-current of this world’s good things, who had doubted whether a share in what was passing, would be acceptable to the new vicar of St. Emeril.

In a manner which must have spoken most feelingly to the heart of an affectionate son, a little anxious for a parent making an unusual exertion, she made the count take his seat by her in the carriage. His son, now spurring his horse, and taking the shortest way to the house, was ready to receive the baroness in a style of decorous neatness that must have been well arranged to be practicable. The carriage did not *now* go round to the side-door: it stopt at the

portico ; and the remembrance of ‘ dear Meryon ’ on that spot, if it *did* occur, could not be very painful under the existing circumstances. He would not have been severe, had he known he had been totally forgotten.

On entering her mansion, and meeting the eyes and respectful obeisance of her dependents, the baroness had no cause to fear ; and the first interview with the ecstatic Annette, convinced her that she was received with undiminished respect and added interest. Her marriage was considered as unfortunate, and her husband as responsible for the waste of her property, and for driving her from her home—sorrow was supposed to have occupied her ; and her return was hailed, as an effort made by her to emerge from a forlorn state of dejection. The count was far more a favourite with Annette than ever Colonel Wanstons had been ; and she could not repress her feeling of regret that his charming son was in orders.—Lady Lynford could have replied, ‘ What then ? he is not restricted as those of *your* church ; ’—but she prudently left the ingenious gentlewoman to recollect this at her next leisure.

It was now become Lady Lynford’s policy to do right, and to conciliate by every mean in her power, the esteem and affection of those around her. She wished for their good-will, in whatever

she might be inclined to do, and for a strong prejudice in her favour to counteract any severe opinion. She did not consequently stand so very independent in her own appreciation, as when she was the recent heiress of St. Emeril's; but she was, under the support of hope, bringing herself down to conform to circumstances; and she gave access with a very good grace, to persons, from admitting whom she would heretofore have excused herself. If one of those who were hindered by having married, from returning to her service, wished to exhibit a baby, or even to ask a favour, she did not feel it prudent to mis-construe the intrusion, or to discountenance such applications; and a very short experiment of her ladyship's toleration, made the St. Emerilians very wise, on the good effects of adversity in making fine ladies more agreeable.

Great exertions had been used, first to complete the restoration of the church to its former decency, and next, to render the vicarage-house capable of receiving Mr. Broderaye and his father, that they might not be found intruders at St. Emeril's Court, when the mistress of it returned. If great applause had been expected for this latter attention, some disappointment must have followed; for the baroness said nothing civil on the

subject : *her* merit consisted in forbearing to express her regret that such diligence had been so successful.

In her first visit to the count and his son, she took the kindest interest in meeting again, and in an improved arrangement, those representatives of invaluable property with which she had been so well acquainted in her former intercourse. Of the collected treasures of the '*bon petit Max*,' she had had no previous idea ; and, with honest delight, and no little pride, she saw a house, which seemed so nearly her own, decorated with whatever assists to form, to improve, or to repay, the classic taste of an elegant travelled man.

But with all her calculation of good manners, she could not persuade herself into any cordiality towards poor Mrs. Holby, who never in her life had done any thing to offend her intentionally, nor even accidentally, except in attempting to be very civil and not taking the way most agreeable to her ladyship. If she asked after her, it was rather with a view to learn how soon she would depart, than how she fared. Some praise might have been afforded her, for not presuming to appear. To the daughter, the baroness had not yet conceived any violent aversion—she was very young, and her character was not sufficiently formed to make it just to class her with her mother. The count seemed disposed to be very

lenient towards them : the inconvenience, if there was any, in their remaining, fell on him ; and even with this abatement, he was so much indebted to his change of habitation, that it would have been worse than unreasonable in him, to complain. Beside that there was some little compensation to be extracted from this endurance ; for Mrs. Holby's situation was, in consequence of a former marriage, affluent : she was liberal and accommodating ; and nothing was wanting that she could contribute, to the furtherance of Mr. Broderaye's wishes :—and during the unsettled state of the two gentlemen, when they were living between the two houses, she had, with great readiness, contrived to save them time and fatigue, by many little hospitable attentions.—She made excellent vegetable soup, which propitiated the count : Mr. Broderaye could say to her, when not able to watch over his father's movements, ‘ Will you take care he does not fatigue himself while I am gone ? ’—And, added to all this, Miss Holby was a pretty little girl, looking, at seventeen, like a child of ten years old, with a profusion of flaxen hair and a marvellous propensity to love every thing that could not love her again, which exhibited itself in the nurture of dormice and Guinea pigs, and in a laborious attendance on a host of insects. All these and many other *picturesque*

qualities, were highly commendatory of 'the child'—as her mother always called her—to the count's favour;—and finding that she had, at times, begun to learn every thing, and knew nothing, there was a delightful opportunity for the exercise of his talents and *fidgetiness*, in instructing her; she learnt with a celerity that made it very agreeable to teach her; and losing whatever she had gained with equal facility, the occupation promised to hold out to some length.

The count was, it must be confessed, much more charmed than his son, with the fair Angelica; but, finding her an amusement to his father, Miss Holby was always sure of the vicar's favourable disposition. And there was one point in her character, which father and son alike admired—a most perfect obedience to her mother, whose care for her was proportioned to her stature, rather than her age, as it did not seem to admit the possibility of her thinking or acting for herself, or having the least wish to do either.

The deportment of Mrs. Holby towards the great lady of St. Emeril's, seemed to admit that there could be no equality of intercourse between persons so widely distant in rank; and it also implied a haughty consciousness of being disliked. Either of the gentlemen would have used his best endeavour to obtain for her a more favourable

opinion; but she rejected all mediation; and, seeming to shrink from the scrutinizing power of such superior intellect, she begged that neither herself nor her daughter might ever be mentioned before Lady Lynford.

Thus restrained in avowing his admiration of *la belle petite Angelique*, the count was driven to fold back his tendernesses on their object; and Mrs. Holby, safe in secrecy and encouraged by this partiality, could relieve her maternal anxiety by confidential consultation with the old gentleman, on her plans for 'the child,' in case of her own demise. They were formed with equal judgment and affection, and on a scale of expense, that indicated very considerable property. With every precaution that could keep '*la belle Angelique*' ignorant that her affectionate parent was subject to the common lot of humanity, she talked of making her will, comforted under the melancholy task, by the count's goodness in accepting the situation of guardian to 'the child.'

It now drew near Midsummer; and Mrs. Holby still being at a loss for a dwelling, the count and Mr. Broderaye very willingly extended her term another quarter of a year, beyond which, she expressed herself thoroughly disinclined to remain at the vicarage-house. Lady Lynford was not pleased; but she had no right of dissent. In

her morning-visits and her enchanting conversations with the gentlemen, it was not always agreeable to her, to see the mother's or the daughter's head pop out at an opposite parlour-door, or to cross upon them, in going round the house to avoid them. She considered them as spies or censors, and was almost tempted to wish the loveliest of all lovely seasons over, that she might be free from their observation.

But, in looking forward to their remove, the baroness overlooked a probably greater indulgence of her wish, which, soon after Midsummer, flattered her. Annette, who needed not her lady's positive declarations, to inform her what persons were in and what out of her favour, came hastily, one morning, to her bed-side, with the enlivening intelligence, that the apothecary had been called up in the night to Mrs. Holby, who had been attacked by apoplexy, and was still, though much recovered, in some danger.

If Lady Lynford had spoken like inconsiderate women, who speak first and think afterwards, she would have said, 'Dost tell me so? say it again:—repeat it—assure me of it.'—But, by habit, the power of consideration had become so familiar, that she scarcely knew when she exercised it. Under the influence of this habit, she replied only, 'Poor soul! I must send to inquire after her.—'

'Take care that one of the men goes with my compliments.'

This was too much for the endurance of Annette, who hated Mrs. Holby, not only as not possessing the favour of the baroness, but as a suspected invidious observer on the village in general, and on herself in particular. There was a decorum in the curate's widow, which could not be expected to see with a favourable eye, the natural frivolity of the French waiting-maid; and in settling herself as a wife, and as an inhabitant of the place, the proceedings of Mademoiselle Annette had claimed more allowance than could well be made, even to her country. She concluded therefore that she was individually hated, and she was neither cautious in publishing this opinion, nor forbearing in the requital of evil for evil.—Under this excitation, she felt somewhat disappointed at the reception bestowed on her intelligence of what gave herself satisfaction; but preserving her native politeness, she began to pull down her enemy, by exalting her mistress;—and extolling her lady's goodness in showing *any* concern for Mrs. Holby, she set it in a still more conspicuous point of view, by confessing her own joy at the probable defeat of a scheme which she imputed to the old lady, of drawing in Mr. Broderaye to marry her daughter.

Every feeling of expediency and of interest, called upon Lady Lynford to frown down this suggestion, with indignation at presumption so utterly unfounded ; but Annette was not so easily to be convinced that she was deserving of this check on her freedom of opinion. Whether her sagacity had discovered something that encouraged her, or her private resentment made her reckless of consequences at the moment, she was not to be stopped ; but still adhering to her conviction, yet resting it solely on her own perception, she compelled her lady again and again to hear her prophesy that Mrs. Holby would, if she lived, secure the new vicar for her daughter. The *c'est pour-quoi*—the emphatical *therefore*, with which she repeated her ardent hope that the old lady might die of this attack, certainly indicated her supposition of the baroness's interest in the event ; and as there was no immediate repetition of the order for the inquiry, Annette might tell herself that she had not erred much, either in hating or in presuming to avow it.

The effect of this on the mind of Lady Lynford was far greater than she suffered it to appear. It was not her external refusal to give her attention, that could hinder the suspicion suggested from reaching her heart ; nor could even her pride, disdainful as it was of all comparison with one so

much beneath her, tell her, firmly enough to convince her, that she had nothing to fear from the puerile attractions of Angelica Holby. After two hours' perturbation, during which time she waited, in hope that the count or his son might call in, she sent, as she had proposed, a message of inquiry, it being the readiest method by which she could obtain the satisfaction of hearing that Mrs. Holby's case was hopeless.—She purchased only disappointment by this *finesse*: the answer returned was of a perfectly opposite import.

Perhaps it was not till this accident occurred, that the baroness was fully sensible of the totality of happiness which she had staked upon one chance. Her view for the future enjoyment of her life, had been so stedfastly fixed on this one contingency, that she had disregarded many circumstances which, in more liberty of perception, must have struck her. Entitled certainly to every service that Mr. Broderaye or his father could render her, she was making the former in effect her co-adjutor, and was giving into the most perfect indolence respecting her own affairs, preferring to hear and see and know, through the medium of Mr. Broderaye's ears and eyes and judgment.—Indolence quickly produces ignorance; and from not choosing to understand, she, in a very short time, became unable to understand:—her

references to Mr. Broderaye were incessant ; and his trouble was great : she began to be overlooked even where she was despotic ; and if the *bon petit Max* had been less popular in his parish, or the irregularity of her ladyship's proceedings less known, she might have not only failed in transferring to him the importance which she conceded ; but she might have made the spiritual guide of a parish an object of ridicule.

To this she was insensible ; nor did she once ask herself why the neighbouring nobility and gentry, who, as the summer advanced, returned to their seats, and who at least had been used to pay a formal visit occasionally at St. Emeril's Court during her minority, now suffered her to remain unwelcomed. Awkward enough, indeed, had been her situation, with regard to these personages, in the short time that she lived at her house with her husband : he had had neither introduction, nor reception : no one seemed to know what was to be done in a case so anomalous and so imperfectly explained by pretences ; but now, she might have told herself she stood where she did on her father's death, and might have expected attentions. It was not that she perceived how culpably she had ruined her respectability by an unaccountable mode of proceeding, that she submitted passively to neglect :—she was anew absorbed in a specula-

tion which made freedom from *espionnage* desirable; and she had too high an opinion of herself, to suppose it possible that any thing which she chose to do, could consign her to oblivion.

But whether she perceived it or was insensible to it, the fact was established, that in her own neighbourhood the greatest favour now bestowed on her, was the supposition that she was not of sound mind; nor could any replies given by the servants who had attended her back to St. Eméril's, remove this prejudice: far more likely were they themselves to be infected with it, when they heard any thing so strange as the detail of her questionable marriage and its catastrophe.

The risque she had run, in suffering the count and his son to learn by report what she had not the courage to reveal, left her no reliance but on their good breeding and delicate respect towards one to whom they had such obligations; but here she was not deceived in her confidence. Whatever they knew respecting her former conduct, reposed in their own bosoms: it did not abate their external demonstrations of regard; nay, indeed sometimes she could fancy—and the supposition did her no good—that Maximilian Broderaye treated her with a considerate tenderness, implying little less than a consciousness that she had suffered, and unmeritedly.

Such indeed was his persuasion ; for during a very short time after his entering his parish, did he remain ignorant of any thing that could be told. His patroness had not sustained any injury from him as an auditor. When Mrs. Holby, with half-sentences, shrugs, and shakes—not very much to be blamed in such a case—declared her inability to make her detail consistent, or to reconcile any thing so mysterious, to any rule of common conduct, he candidly sought out whatever could assist in the acquittal of his patroness, and with an authoritative sagacity decided that the only rational construction which these disjointed particulars would bear, was, that this pitiably-exalted being, not half so well protected as any cottager's daughter, had been, by some want of care in those who had the guardianship of the last months of her minority, either led or driven into an imprudent marriage, which had turned out to her detriment, from which she had been released by the death of her husband, and after which event she had, for a time, felt it painful to return to St. Emeril's. By lenient expressions and charitable explanations of this kind, he was, without her knowing her obligation to him, smoothing every asperity towards her, pleading her cause with those who were disposed to acquit her, and, in every way, preparing the minds of those around her, to

receive her with undiminished deference and increased tenderness. And while thus charitably occupied, he by his prudence so ordered his grateful zeal as to prevent all supposition of a common cause between them.

Could she have rested in that which seemed now her natural and almost inevitable path of conduct, she would have been secure from every evil consequence, save one, that her former imprudence had connected with itself; but rest was not congenial to her spirit under any circumstances; and this suspicion of Mrs. Holby's design, was a leaven that fermented from the first moment of contact. Notwithstanding the discouragement she had inflicted on Annette, she could not forbear wishing for further information; and subsequent messages of inquiry after the health of Mrs. Holby, being more and more favourable to the wishes of those to whom her existence was valuable, there was nothing left but to make Annette reveal all she knew.

This was easily done, but not so easily endured; for Annette had now more than her own conjecture to bring forward. Mrs. Holby had been overheard, when walking in the garden with the count, setting forth the merits of her daughter, in a way little short of proposing her for Mr. Broderaye; and Annette, as if she had provided

against the demand of the present moment, could tell, that on her recovery from her seizure, she had sent for the count, and had, almost with tears, urged something respecting her daughter.—In another conference, she had expressed great anxiety for ‘her dear Angelica,’ in the probable event of a second attack ; and, it was said, had hinted the consolation she should have felt in leaving this treasure under the protecting care of so excellent a husband as Mr. Broderaye. She had added to all this, the lure of wealth, by intimating, that Angelica would have every thing she had to bequeath.

Annette could tell no more because she knew no more. What she had reported was correct. Mrs. Holby had, at various times, tried the subject on the count, who not a little prepossessed in favour of so pretty, so delicate, so amiable a creature as *la belle petite Angelique*, could not but think and confess that if his *bon petit Max* liked the lady, the opportunity of accommodating himself thus with a wife, was another favour of Fortune to his dear boy.

There was not an objection to be made to Miss Holby—at least none that the count could have admitted,—for the very circumstances that rendered her uninteresting to his son, were those which called forth the old man’s admiration and tenderness ; and Maximilian, when his father

cautiously hinted Mrs. Holby's very pardonable solicitude, had nothing to bring forward in excuse for his own want of interest, but that which must impeach his judgment in the eyes of the count. Yet he did excuse himself—and, without betraying the recollection which this overture very painfully called up, he begged that the matter might no more be mentioned.

CHAPTER XIII.

IT was, soon after this revelation from Annette, very evident to the baroness that Mr. Broderaye's spirits were oppressed; and as she did not know what had been his reception of the proposal, she could not divine that his dejection was anxiety lest all the requests he had made to his father to be very circumspect in conveying his consoling expressions to the old lady, and to keep the matter profoundly secret, should not be cogent enough to prevent some disturbance in their domestic settlement, or some publicity of this delicate question. She chose to believe—because it was the most disquieting—that Mr. Broderaye hesitated; and she wished him to know at least, that she was not insensible to the want of respect implied in this exclusion from his confidence.

In the bitter hours which her tormenting spirit compelled her to pass in fruitless rumination, she could now derive no comfort from the object that interested her. She was deterred from putting queries to herself, as to her own prospects, by fear of immediate depression. Her generosity was indeed

romantic ; but was it mis-placed ? No, no—it only needed that her former husband should have been eligible under her father's will, and that Mr. Broderaye should have had more ambition than was to be found in him, to have made St. Emeril's Court and its exalted mistress, a gift and a giver of happiness such as this world does not often produce, to one eminently deserving it.

Annette's next report was alarming. The old lady was recovered : Miss, poor thing ! was in high spirits ; and every body, attached by her dutiful attendance on her parent, and sympathizing in her joy, thought no reward adequate to her merits but a husband, and consequently had decided that the match *must* take place between her and the vicar. Surmises are eggs in country-villages, soon hatched into active existence :—what was wished was guessed—what was guessed was asserted ; and Annette could tell her lady, that the match was to take place, with all possible speed of preparation.

Instantly on receiving this astounding intelligence, Lady Lynford sent for Mr. Broderaye ; and had he been at hand, he might have been called to a still more delicate decision ; for every thing that had been her rule of conduct, every principle which she thought inherent in her mind, was now amalgamated with the feelings excited ;

and very hard would it have been, on a sudden, to separate them.—Fortunately, he was gone to a distance that prevented his reaching home in time to obey the summons that day; and by the following morning, the baroness had made a sleepless night useful. Her pride was triumphant; and perverse haughtiness prompted her to any degree of indignation.—She meant not either to claim or to sue—she even told herself that no man, after even a hesitation on so degrading a proposal, could be worthy of her; and she was half disposed to forbid the coming of Mr. Broderaye; but her worst temper was now uppermost, and she would see him to his annoyance.

He came at the first possible moment, regretting that he was out of the way when her message had been sent. She was almost inclined to send him back unsatisfied as to the business on which she had summoned him: she thought a fit punishment would be the leaving him to suppose that his absence had created some irremediable inconvenience, or occasioned some desperate loss to her; but the first experiment showed that this would not do:—he had to plead the call of duty, as that which he had obeyed: something connected with his father's comfort, had been the cause of his absence; and he was not lightly to be persua-

ded that any thing could have occurred, so very very fatally depending on his immediate presence.

Thrown out of her play, she came nearer the truth. She told what she had heard:—he expressed a dignified regret that it had got abroad, and that she could give credit to such a report:—and here he would have stopped; but the self-tormenting spirit does not love a short colloquy—the antagonist must throw again, or the mover of hostility cannot return the weapon; and not merely peace but defeat ensues.

Though no positive satisfaction as to his disposition or intentions was to be extracted from his guarded reply, Lady Lynford, in her present mood, chose to assume that which was the most discordant to her wishes; and, hoping perhaps to make him contradict her, she affected to remind him of his perfect liberty to follow his own inclination, and to act on his own ideas of happiness. He did not, or he would not, see what had excited this interest; but he began to feel, as forcibly as her ladyship, what was due to himself; and having listened with perfect self-command to her provoking permission to please himself, and to some expressions, little short of taunting, on his *catchability*, he suffered her to repeat her recommendation to him to consult only his own heart; and without condescending to give a woman under

the influence of such childish peevishness, any satisfaction, he finished his visit in the best style of a well-bred man, and of one who has not his first lessons in human nature and its caprices to learn.

She had no longer any pleasure in the count's visits, because she supposed that only his politeness hindered his reproaching her with her behaviour to his son, and talking of the intended match. And in her intercourse with the vicar, which was much on the wane in its frequency, she experienced sensations still more bitter. All her views and wishes for his benefit, were reduced to the class of things gone by ; and he was going to act independently of her, and to raise to importance persons whom she despised. She who had foregone the innocent temptation of divulging to him her power and her design of giving him a provision for life, could not endure his acting without her, in a point in which she had no right to interfere—and of poor little Angelica Holby, Baroness Lynford was downright jealous !

Whatever cause Mr. Broderaye had to complain, he was too sensible to Lady Lynford's kindness and his obligations, to exercise this right, or to suffer it to influence his conduct to her beyond what she made necessary. He did not act without caution and consideration ; and his great unwillingness even to *seem* that, which, while he retained

his memory he never could *be*, prompted him to do any thing that could convince her he was not ungrateful: he meditated a frank disclosure of the whole business and the termination he had imposed on it. ‘If her pride for me is hurt,’ said he to himself, ‘by the possibility of my listening to this proposal, it would be but due respect to her, to assure her of my perfect repugnance to it. I could tell her my fixed resolution; and this would relieve the anxiety of her generous heart—for she cannot be less inclined for me than I am for myself, to this connexion; nor can she dislike the mother more than I do, for placing a harmless ingenuous young creature in such a point of view.—But I dread Lady Lynford’s penetration—she has been, she says, herself unhappy; and in her peculiar situation, her unhappiness must have been—but it matters not what it must have been.—Sufferers by disease are very sagacious as to symptoms; and if I say I will not marry Miss Holby, she will wish to know why; and I shall be drawn in, unawares, to confidential confession:—I may be led on—and she may get out of me what I have resolved shall never escape my lips—and this would distress me beyond measure, as it may then come to the knowledge of my poor father.’

On this ground, Mr. Broderaye remained silent on this subject, endeavouring by every atten-

tion which her ladyship would accept, to remove the impression from her mind. To this she partially yielded; but a distracting uncertainty ensued, which at length prompted her to mention the affair cautiously to the count. He told her, without reserve, how his 'dear boy' had received the overture; but the comfort which this brought, was instantly destroyed by his connecting with it, his own regret on the rejection, and expressing some hope, founded on the authority of a French father over a son, that Max might change his mind.

Not to be allowed to hope, was, with Lady Lynford, to despair. St. Emeril's again grew odious to her. She could have borne a tedious suspense: she could have waited the progress of her own influence; but she could not bear to be precluded from all confidence, to be reduced in importance, and to have that which she most dreaded, wished by one so much indebted to her, and who was placed so near her. Her situation was rendered worse, by her having spoken on the subject; and she was in a dilemma still more distressing than even her regretted friend Meryon's fancied labyrinth.

What was to be done? St. Emeril's was intolerable—she *must* quit it.—Whither should she betake herself?—Her former place of shelter was now repulsive in recollection:—it was August—tra-

velling in England did not suit her—the continent was not in a state to invite females.—Neither publicity nor privacy would accord with her circumstances—again, nothing appeared so little ineligible as her town-house : there she could, at least, remain till she saw whether Mrs. Holby pursued her intention of removing from St. Emeril.

To Grosvenor-square she resolved to betake herself, and stood indignantly all the previous resistance of the count and the brotherly regret of Maximilian. Her pride felt some gratification, and she could almost have made terms on which she would remain ; and when the hour arrived, in which she was to carry her wayward project into execution, she was indebted to pride and obstinacy for her firmness.

In London, she settled herself again in the completest solitude : there was not a house within sight, that was not committed to the care of an old woman without occupation, whose hours, when she was not eating or sleeping, were spent on one and the same chair, in one and the same window of the dining-parlour. Every shop-keeper was at the sea-side or at his villa : if a journeyman sold any article, it was in his boots and spurs, impatiently awaiting the customer's decision, that he might pluck his hat off the nail, and hie to the next livery-stable for his Rozinante or Bayardo : the circu-

lating-libraries had sent all their books to country-customers and stations ; there were neither exhibitions for the forenoon, nor any amusements that she could partake for the evening. To rise, to breakfast, read the papers, in which, thus excluded, she had no interest—to change her dress, drive out,—again change her dress, dine, repose on her couch till time for tea, and then take a book, to which she could not bend her engrossed attention, was the business of her six days in succession—the seventh was now, alas ! little different, for her habits were not improving.

A fortnight's experiment would have made this intolerable, if a persuasion that she was born to be miserable, had not begun to spread itself over her mind, and quelled all resistance to her fate. She had abundant time for thought ; but it was employed rather in collecting matter for thought, than in any profitable species of thinking. Even Annette had lost her power of amusing—she had no sources from which she could draw, for the purpose ; and when, in this sad stagnation, the assiduous *soubrette* tried the exciting experiment of reporting the butler's insolence, in having said ' his lady wanted some real misfortune to teach her to value happiness,' the baroness was so far from resenting it, that she felt the truth of the

words, and secretly applauded the man's superior sagacity.

In this state of noxious vegetation, she was roused from her fruitless self-communing, by intelligence of Count Broderaye's dangerous illness. Mrs. Holby, she had heard with perfect indifference, or something more lively, could not live long ; but, for the count, she felt all her kindness now revive in its full force. The weather was intensely hot, and nothing could be less desirable than a long journey ; but there were no obstacles to any thing that Lady Lynford ever chose to undertake : she ordered four post-horses for six o'clock the next morning, and with expedition according with this promptitude, she reached St. Emeril's Court, happy to find herself there again, on any terms that restored her former interest in the count and his son.

Who could behave so well as Lady Lynford, when half the world would have behaved ill ? Nothing but the scene before her, existed in her recollection. She was incessant in her exertions, unwearied in her assiduities ; and, had she not possessed every facilitation of intercourse, she would have taken up her abode at the parsonage. Mrs. Holby was the care of her daughter ; and there was little or no communication between the two parts of the family ; but Lady Lynford was

every thing in the count's sick room ; and more could not have been expected from the nearest relation.

Mr. Broderaye's conduct was what may be supposed ; and the baroness was called on to support him, at the same time that every thought was directed to the count. The old man was aware of his danger, and prepossessed with its probable termination : he repaid to the utmost, by his sensibility and acknowledgments, the attentions she bestowed on him : and she had the satisfaction of finding them valuable, not merely as compliment : her powers were useful ; and she was insensible to every thing but the good she was doing. To persuade her to spare herself was impossible ; but, in the course of ten days, her strength proved unequal to the demand ; and she was compelled to take time to recover, during which she remained at home, receiving reports from the count's chamber, every three or four hours.

The fever which such unusual exertion had brought on, was subsiding ; and about sun-set of the third day of her unwilling absence, she had fallen into a very quiet sleep, when a messenger came from the count, to inquire how long it might be before he might hope to see her, as he felt his end fast approaching. Annette sturdily refused to wake her lady : she recollected the horror of a

scene of death, which the baroness had shown in the last hours of her father—‘it was better to have every thing over, before she was disturbed.’

At the first possible moment, Lady Lynford again visited the invalid, ignorant of the message that had been sent. She had not announced her own recovery, or given expectation of her being able to come down to the vicarage-house; and, on arriving there, she followed the servant too quickly into the count’s chamber, to admit of retreat or alterations, had any been necessary.

Great was her surprise at what she saw, and what she seemed to interrupt. The count, still more emaciated than when she last saw him, and in a state of weakness that made his speaking laborious, was sitting, propped up in his bed—his skeleton-hands extended, his eyes glistening and speaking various emotions.—A sopha was placed near his bed, on which was extended Mrs. Holby, pale, death-like: her daughter was kneeling on the ground, sobbing, with her face hid in her mother’s lap: and Mr. Broderaye was standing on the other side, close to his father’s bed, his face hidden by his hands.

The count’s animation increased on the baroness’s entrance; and any apprehension which his rapid wasting might occasion, was checked by his

vehement declarations of his own perfect happiness ; ‘ he had nothing to ask, nothing to wish : he had lived long enough. Max would be happy—Max had engaged himself to *la belle petite Angelique*. His only grief was, that he could not inform *Madame la baronne* of this happy mind of his son, in time to show their respect : he had sent to the *chateau*, and was grieved to hear she was still so much an invalid ; but, since that time, he had felt himself so much sinking, that he begged his dear child not to delay ; and they had just made the solemn vow, and had promised him it was to take place in the month after his decease.’

‘ O count ! live for ever !’—the baroness might have ejaculated—had she spoken her sentiments—but they were not to be spoken—and she had nothing else in such a moment ready to substitute—she therefore drew the chair, which had been set for her at the foot of the bed, to the side, where Mrs. Holby and her daughter were ; and placing it between them and the count, sate with her back towards them, and began to complain of her own weakness.

Mr. Broderaye had come forward, as if nothing could excuse him from the respect due to her : he was surprised at her action, and looked at her, as if his eye could discover the cause.—Hamlet, however well personified, never started as he

started—he rushed out of the room, and something like an appeal to a Superior Power was muttered from his lips—a very unusual effect of surprise in him.

Mrs. Holby, ill as she was, could not now rest in oblivion. She exerted herself to inquire the state of her ladyship's convalescence, and seemed to think herself authorized by circumstances to be considered: she patted and coaxed her daughter; she apostrophized on her own situation; and she *poor thing'd* and *poor me'd*, till notice seemed inevitable;—but she had Lady Lynford to deal with, and all her efforts were vain.

The baroness, however, to acquit herself to her own satisfaction, bestowed on the dying count, not only all the attentions which he could claim, but all those which she withheld from Mrs. Holby. She inquired assiduously what she could do for him, or send him.—‘Was there nothing he could think on that he could eat, or which might contribute to restore his strength?’

Perceiving, by leaning a little backward, that he answered only by signs, declining as fruitless all that was offered, Mrs. Holby kept herself in readiness to answer, if not for him, for herself; and her replies were not at all of the same complexion. She told herself how weak *she* was, and how serviceable what was suggested might be to per-

sons reduced by illness—but she sped no better. The baroness, under the plea of fatigue, made her visit short ; and, not admitting of the count's farewell, but promising to see him again, if she was able, in the evening, she withdrew. He shook his head ;—and his gestures, while his eyes followed her, said, ‘ Heaven bless and reward you !’

Mr. Broderaye came from his library as she passed it in her way out of the house. He looked scarcely more alive than his father : he did not utter a word ; but he wrung the hand she did not now offer him, and in silence put her safely into her carriage.

When within the park, she desired to be driven about it for an hour. It was necessary to collect her scattered thoughts. She had a long way to call some of them : others were rather nearer at hand than was pleasant.

Little had she gained from thinking at liberty, when she found herself close to the entrance of her house. Her approach had driven, two different ways, one of the men-servants and Annette, who had been consulting on the least objectionable way of informing her, that, had she now come from the village, she must have been overtaken by the messenger who had been sent to announce the death of the count.—The necessity of Annette's immediately waiting on her lady, answered every purpose of information :—scared—distracted—not

knowing which way to go or what she was doing, her blunders soon released her from all caution; and the behaviour of her superior under the shock, either surprised or comforted her: it indicated a stupified insensibility.

Sitting down by herself, there was no perverse form into which she could torture what she had witnessed, and its concomitant circumstances, that she left untried; as if, to excite all the irritable character of her mind, was the strongest defence against painful feeling. The loss she sustained by the count's death, had not reached her powers of perception; and the common feeling of regret on such an event, she left for those more at leisure. She saw in idea, the wedding-banquet made out of the funeral-baked-meats, and the espousals of the son, instantly succeeding to the interment of the father. Flight was now less a matter of option than in the former instance: accustomed to follow implicitly the lead of her own precipitate feelings, she considered nothing beyond the point nearest in view; and, only leaving a billet for Mr. Broderaye, exonerating him from the trouble he had taken in her concerns, she gave orders for an immediate removal to Bath, and was there before the vicar could appear abroad.

She had flattered herself unreasonably and immoderately.—Instead of improving her judgment

by experience, she seemed to be growing more childishly-confident than ever, that she had the power of bending events to her own purposes. Still she could have told any one but herself, that 'the battle is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift.'—But here interposed, to blind and mislead her, the natural tendency to close association with that which we love and esteem, and the impatience to do good in our own way, to those who have excited an interest in our hearts.

In bitter disappointment, she settled herself at Bath, as if waiting the order to despair, and utterly unprovided with any resource for the future.—Yet, after some days, Hope was again blossoming in her fertile mind :—the breath of Fame blighted it ; and all power of resistance to necessity seemed then exhausted : she became an invalid, and was appalled at the rapid corrosion of her health and constitution. To yield passively to this, at her age, was inconsistent with that tenacity of existence which those who trifle the most daringly with life, feel as forcibly as the more prudent. She began to be sensible of danger, and grew earnest to avert it. Her choice of means was very much limited ; for the best were those from which she had fled : exertion was necessary ; but for this she wanted an impulse and an end : society and dissipation were then recommended by medical wis-

dom: these must be tried:—something might occur before *they* failed.

Her hasty or rather desperate choice of the place where she might dispel her thoughts, was favourable to this novel scheme of life. It was not without considerable reluctance, that she felt obliged, by something not far off infirmity, to come down to the common pursuits and amusements of the world; but the option offered her was terrific, and amounted almost, in effect, to arbitrary command. She therefore assumed the character that now belonged to her—that of an invalid consigned to dissipation—and availed herself of the hourly opportunities afforded her, of connecting herself with persons whom she considered, even if her superiors in rank, infinitely beneath her.

In three months spent at Bath, after this determination, she had collected a sufficient stock of fashionable friendships, to set up in London; and on her arrival there, she prepared her house, by the elegance of its decorations, for the purpose to which her life seemed now devoted. All fear respecting the secret of her marriage was worn off, not by any reasonable process, but by habit; and she entered the lists with the gayest of the gay, taking at once a commanding situation, on the persuasion that, after a life of such irregular tenour,

she might better succeed in society as a ruler than as a subject; and with this view, and under this necessity, she opened her house in the highest style; and omitting no modification of London entertainments, she was quickly in the vortex that precludes thought by inducing vertigo, and self-acquaintance by unbounded adulation.

But no one at all accustomed to that species of 'strenuous idleness' so well expressed in German by the word *zeitvortreiben*, or driving time forward, needs be told that there is no leisure more languid, no sensation of inappetency more sickening, than that which interposes in the centre of noise and nonsense, and compels the unfettered mind to ask 'if this be joy.'—Such moments, and more than moments, Lady Lynford experienced, and in increasing frequency, when she involuntarily compared her present artificial mode of paltry existence, with former periods of her life.—Under 'dear Meryon's' tutelage, her judgment stood firm in its approbation of her habits; and in her widowed retreat, there were charms that beguiled the hours of their weight. Not accustomed, in early youth, to crowds and the concomitants of crowds, there was a selectness of taste about her, that, had she entered on life in the best usual way, and proceeded in it regularly, would have made her

society sought by the persons most worth her seeking; and now, when she had collected or joined a multitude,—in the chilling moments referred to, she could not but recollect the superior interest of private friendship. In a fashionable performance of music, the merit of which was to be *seen* rather than *heard*, she called to mind the sweet evenings on the Wye, when the count, his son, herself, and the clergyman of the parish, had, without the encouragement or annoyance of auditors, formed a little concert of delicious morsels of music. And, when prevailed on to exhibit her own proficiency, and obliged to select that which did credit rather to her execution than her power of expression, she thought with regret, of the improvement she had derived from the taste of Maximilian, when, by the commentary of his own perceptions, he taught her to catch a meaning unperceived, and to make her fingers wait upon her voice, till the sentiment of the composer was exhausted.

Evening-assemblies were, to her yet struggling mind, the show-rooms of milliners and dress-makers; but a more painful contrast was produced by crowded dinner-tables when compared with the fashion of some houses, of far less emulation, to which she found she had no access, and of which she would have had little knowledge, but

for Mr. Broderaye's letters to his father during his occasional residences in town: these houses and their select habits she knew to exist; and the *entrée* to them was one of the many refined indulgences of good taste, to which her new association was to have introduced her—but she had it not: her pretensions were unapparent, her fitness was passed over—she was advertised—but she was not known.

A week's visit to a young couple who regarded her condescension as an honour, was very near effecting another revolution in her unsettled state. She had gone little short of inviting herself; but politeness would not suffer her to feel this. The family was that of a young clergyman, perfectly a gentleman and an elegant scholar, whose wife, a woman of personal attractions that might have excused the too-much or too-little of female folly or female usefulness, had, in early life, by sobriety of conduct and admirable good sense, saved herself from the necessity of being beholden to her beauty.—They had two children, who were so managed as to turn upon a visitor, only the agreeable side of the infant character.—Pleasant young people came and went, or remained: the ladies were companionable to the gentlemen—the gentlemen well-bred and kind to the ladies. Subjects of taste were brought forward; and a

superiority of attainment which pervaded the party, made what would have been the *task* of the ignorant, their amusement. The economy of the house was conducted in quiet regularity—it was the dial, not the machinery, that met the eye of the observer ; and when Lady Lynford was informed that this perfect comfort and its attendant respectability, were maintained by an income not much exceeding the sum-total of that which she called her *pittance*, added to the yearly value of the living annexed to St. Emeril's, she almost wished that her lot in life had been cast no higher, and that she could have secured such peace of mind on a similar plan.—This being unprofitable speculation, she contemplated a retreat with this amiable family ; but deferring her intention till her return, the sight of her rose-coloured satin hangings which had been put up, in her absence, in a fourth or fifth drawing-room, dissolved the delusion, and restored her again to artificial life, the vapid pleasures of which she seemed to be pursuing with avidity, when, in truth, she was only running away from the pains of solitude.

Leaving her ladyship to blaze in the world of fashion, sacrificing all her good tastes and meritorious habits to the erroneous opinion of others, that folly can conduce to health, but yet never

entirely losing that anchorage which was her security against foundering under her own pilotage, it may be amusing, or at least interesting, to go back without her to St. Emeril, and see what had been doing there.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE even tenour of substituted happiness in which Mr. Broderaye had hoped he might pass a retired and useful life, had been extremely discomposed by the unfortunate wish of Mrs. Holby to leave her daughter under his conjugal protection : it had made him repent bitterly the domestic association ; but he could not suffer it to render him unjust to Miss Holby's merits : he had flattered himself that time and his gentle opposition would restore things to their former good order, and satisfy his father ; and had done all that he thought could conduce to these desirable ends. Mrs. Holby's death or her removal was to be looked for : her daughter then must be otherwise placed ; and most ardently did he wish, for the sake of the young woman, that any one might come in her way, who had a heart to offer her, and influence to make it acceptable.

But it was a death-stroke to his hopes, when he found with what tenacity his father had embraced the idea of his marriage with '*la belle petite Angelique* ;'—and when he saw his health so fast giving way, without any abatement of his earnestness, he felt himself consigned to a fate in which he had no voice, but in which the cus-

tom of his father's country called on him to acquiesce. As long, however, as he felt justified in resistance, he resisted; and it was not till the time mentioned, that he had yielded. When his word was given, and his destiny irrevocable, Lady Lynford's conduct at the death-bed of his father, had forced upon him the conviction of her attachment;—and though he would, circumstanced as he was, have made equal resistance to any predilection of her ladyship's generous heart, yet that he had possessed the power of giving pain, which he could but too well estimate, rendered him tenfold more unhappy.

There was now no remedy for all this. His word was given to Angelica; and on the day month of his father's decease, he made her Mrs. Broderaye. From that time, it was his endeavour to make her life easy and happy; and though this was for some weeks very much thwarted by the lingering ailments and the interference of her mother, he saw with candid satisfaction, and in the most favourable light, all the merits of his wife's disposition, and trusted that she would appear to still greater advantage, when at liberty to act on her own judgment:—that she had none, was most artfully concealed.

The time came when the experiment was to be made. Mrs. Holby died, and her daughter was

utterly incapacitated by grief, and deluged in tears. The old lady, in the last days of her life, had spent much time in conference with Angelica, to which the presence of Mr. Broderaye seemed an interruption; and in occasional deliriums, she mentioned his name in a way that needed a recollection of her irresponsible situation, to render it palatable. Before she expired, however, she informed him that her daughter had her orders, and that she had left her every thing she possessed in the world: what this was, she did not say, but her manner indicated that he might look for an income with his wife, more than equal to his own. The love of money, or a greediness of that which it purchases, had not got possession of his affections; and he rested content for some days after the funeral, with no more information than a scrap of written paper, nearly of the self-same general import as Mrs. Holby's last words, afforded.

But at length he began to think it time that Mrs. Broderaye should set some bounds to her wailings, and resume the very little of activity which she had yet brought forward. He had never yet descended to the chaffering with hucksters, or the examination of a higler's stock in trade. He had an aversion to all low pursuits, and to every thing connected with petty cares; and to a natural high-minded dislike was added his

observation, that they narrowed the mind of every man who made them of importance to himself. When once, in London, he had been hailed from a butcher's shop, elegantly fitted up, indeed, by an acquaintance, and stopping to speak to him, found recollections *interlarded*, as may well be said, with directions to the master, too low for repetition—he had said to himself, ‘ This stupid fellow will not stop on this level,’—and the event had authorized his prediction—for the man whom Maximilian had originally found a soldier in a foreign country, as if he had beat his sword into a carving-knife, instead of a pruning-hook, had so filled his mind with ideas of provisions and the lore connected with the purchase of them, that he could get no further from the subject than from his own mouth, and the mouths of those whom he was fated to feed, to the mouth of his purse which bled for them ; and in this short oscillation, his brains contracted such a cramp, that he was, immediately on marriage, a most exemplary miser, and to a degree that would have alarmed the consciences or the delicacy of some of the most famous of the sect.—‘ I despise the selfishness of profusion,’ said Mr. Broderaye to his new wife, ‘ as much as I abhor covetousness—I have no objection to the practice of self-denial—I can have pleasure in it, as assisting me in keeping the

mastery of myself—I would plough or dig if necessary ; but I will not direct your maid-servants in their occupations, nor usurp your authority over your cook—by bespeaking my dinner.’

Mr. Broderaye spoke rashly when he said this ; for with his Angelica rested the question ; but he saw at present nothing that required him to do more than urge his wife to make some effort to recover from her affliction, and some resistance to an imbecility of woe that was, at once, its own cause and effect ; but he soon found out the folly of contending with the weak : nothing could convince his wife that even the amiable has its boundary : the deceased count had denominated her filial attachment amiable—and amiable she was determined to be, be the expense what it might ; and as if this *amiability*, like the vine when deprived of its supporting elm, must seek the next near passive friend, hers, in default of its accustomed leaning, was presently disposed to rest on the vicar ; and it was no inconsiderable addition to his trouble and uneasiness, to find his Angelica beginning to dread his leaving her for an hour, and receiving him at his return from the next market-town, as if he had escaped shipwreck. No sensible man likes such a compliment, though he may pity the weakness that pays it ; and least of all men, was it acceptable to Maximilian Broderaye,

who had, in his mind, a notion of a female character compounded of soft affections ennobled by great qualities, not at all resembling the distinctions which he found in that of his partner for life.

Again he urged, and increased his urgency, that she would take courage and make herself acquainted with the state of the property and effects bequeathed to her : still in vain : she assured him she should die, if she looked at any thing that had been ‘ her dear mamma’s.’

In this state of things he was surprised by a visit from a stranger, who described himself, and was recognised by Mrs. Broderaye with a sort of sullen acquiescence, as a son by a former wife of her mother’s first husband, and, in that relation, claiming, on her demise, the whole of that income which she had described as in her own disposal : it had been, in truth, a mere rent-charge on the estate, existing only with the old lady’s life ; and now, to the great satisfaction of those who had been offended by her marrying again, and had grudgingly seen her possessed of it for so many years after it, reverting to her first husband’s representatives. She had received this income half-yearly ; and her own receipts specifying the tenure, were produced, and acknowledged by her daughter,

under an affectation of simplicity, not at all certifying her ignorance of the proceeding.

Adieu now to the fair Angelica's fortune : Mrs. Holby, originally portionless, had uniformly spent her own income ; and her second marriage had left her no richer than it found her. The goods and chattels of mother and daughter were worth nothing : an old post-chaise with a fine lining and gilt springs—two worn-out horses, kept at grass—some harness—the furniture of three rooms, with a few kitchen-utensils, were the most valuable articles. Mr. Holby's books and sermons had been sold on his decease ; and not a trace of his having existed was to be discovered—in short, Mr. Broderaye had—his wife :—of *that* he was very sensible.

Mrs. Broderaye's deportment showed her, at least in part, a partaker in her husband's disappointment ; and as if deceived by one whose confidence she thought she possessed, she suffered resentment to take the place of filial regret, and to express itself almost in terms of repentance, for the sorrow she had wasted : she now obtruded on her husband, whatever had been her mother's, and pestered him with papers which ought, long before, to have been consigned to the flames : he had unfolded and examined, till he was weary,

without finding any thing that claimed reprieve, and was on the point of condemning, unheard, all the rest of the tribe—but here his little wife's prudence interposed, and by encouraging his patience, she led him into the middle of a tied-up bundle of those very imperfect manuscripts—called bills without receipts.

Not being able to answer for the preservation of his own good-humour under such an investigation, and feeling for his wife, whom he expected to see overwhelmed with confusion, the vicar retired to examine these informing documents, and in silence and solitude made himself acquainted with their contents: they were bills to the amount of half his yearly income, all made out in the name of Miss Holby, some of them of long standing, and including, beside the usual consumption of personal wear, her wedding-clothes, repairs of the old post-chaise, farrier' charges, an apothecary's bill—and livery clothes for the foot-boy.

It was reasonable to expect some explanation of these matters; and it was necessary that the husband and wife should immediately understand each other. Mr. Broderaye therefore no longer remained in retreat: he sent for his wife; and while waiting for her arrival, he listened to whatever his unreprieving spirit could urge in her behalf. He meant not to be unkind, even if it were

requisite to be firm and decided ; but to be firm and decided, if requisite, he resolved, even if the revelation he had to make, should, for a time, distress her to some excess.

There was little cause for apprehension on this head ; for Mrs. Broderaye, fully aware of the nature of the task which she had set her husband, was prepared to meet his comments on it. When he began to speak, she began to reply :—‘ she knew what he was going to say—but it was not her fault :—mamma was always so short of money !—and she thought that by having the bills made out in this way, she should get time :—she thought that when she had seen her married, these trifles would be paid off of course : she herself could not be married without all new clothes—nobody did—nor could any body expect it—it might easily be paid by little and little.’

Not to be angry under provocation so unpardonable, was to subscribe to any exertion of low cunning that his Angelica’s small wits, now developing themselves, might devise as conducive to her own purposes, or which had been dictated to her in the most impressive hour of her parent’s counsels. It was necessary to deter her from craft by the terror of immediate punishment ; and this terror operated so forcibly and so quickly when called forth, that it would have been striking

a prostrate antagonist to repeat even a threat. Angelica, a very Lodona when once the fountains of her eyes were in action, and even in her humiliation provoking, by seeming to dread lest he should so impossibly forget himself, as to strike her, was shrouded in her abject cowardice, and receiving all that he thought necessary to say, like a child detected in a sweetmeat-closet, she found her resource in pouting, turning her back, neglecting every thing that claimed her attention, and trying to convert herself into an ill-used object of pity. Fortunately, there could be no co-existence between this and fondness.

The demands made on the vicar's purse under Mrs. Holby's management, were so fastened on him, that, without exposing his wife, he could not extricate himself—and the length of time elapsed since part of the debts had been incurred, called for a speedy liquidation.—On this point, Mrs. Broderaye had no feeling—she could hear him recount his embarrassments, and declare himself at a loss to remove them : she could see him abridge his own moderate indulgences, sell his saddle-horse, and pack up a favourite picture for the London market, without taking to herself any blame or expressing the smallest sympathy. Her own retrenchment consisted only in wearing with

less care, the unnecessarily expensive clothes for which he had eventually paid; and what, in her folly, she had at times suffered to escape her lips, indicated that the neighbours could perceive that her mother's debts were paying out of her indulgences. For such baseness and all resembling it, the only fit punishment is the giving it ample room to defeat its purpose by its excess.

There was now no St. Emeril's Court for the vicar to resort to for change of ideas—no Baroness Lynford, whose generous mind would have been delighted to have said, 'Let *my* purse supply you.' She, poor soul! was doing her utmost—and this was now, perhaps, praiseworthy—to drive St. Emeril's from her thoughts; and any mention of or allusion to it was painful. Her business was well done by her banker, with very little recognition on her part; and that which required any act of hers, was despatched in its simplest form. And even when Annette communicated the death of Mrs. Holby, the tidings had been too ill received, to leave her any encouragement to proceed.

Mr. Broderaye had matter for all sorts of thought. In his meditations, he could not but sincerely regret his estrangement from his patroness; but he still looked forward to a time when, all former ideas forgotten, they might again be

friends; and he considered his acting uprightly as the only mean he had in his power to use for this desirable end.

In his parish he was happy: his influence gained strength as he became known; and the restraints to which he had subjected himself by his integrity, could strike the apprehension of many who would, in the same case, have done exactly the contrary: he was stopt in his walks, with requests, that 'if ever he *did* want a horse, he would accept one of Farmer Modbury's,' or 'just send up to Ned Sanford's:'—he had more than his tithe of eggs, cream, and poultry; and the vicar was the idol of his flock.

The delicacy of her constitution, while it rendered Mrs. Broderaye more pitiable, was in itself an inconvenience where economy was necessary; but as she had brought no heir to the noble house into which she had married, she might boast herself an economist. This, however, was the cause of great wailing; and that she was, of all matrons, the least capable of bringing up a family, was a consideration not in the least preponderating against the diminution of comparative consequence which she felt under this exemption from a common lot. The vicar did not see the privation exactly in the light of a misfortune; but it was a topic he seldom led forward. There were, in-

deed, pantomime-methods of making him understand his wife's regret : she was lavish in her fondness for all children, and was the first to announce all the births in Water-lane or the High-street.—Of the deaths or distressing diseases of children, of those who proved a torment to parents, or who, by their number, divided a morsel of bread into atoms, she spoke nothing.

Eighteen months of conjugal endurance, served to wear channels in the patience of Maximilian Broderaye, in which his annoyances pursued their course, with less galling to his feelings, than when they had their way to make. He learnt the trick of his wife's temper ; and by sometimes being beforehand with it, at others, by making it its own punishment, and uniformly by disappointing its hope of irritating him, he managed it, instead of being managed by it. He had, by sacrifices, forbearance, and prudence, freed himself from her debts : he had his duties to occupy his serious thoughts, and his elegant pursuits when he could relax from them :—he had a neighbourhood that offered him society, and promised him friendships founded on good opinion ; and he was not disposed to murmur at the Hand which filled his cup, because it did not run over. He had a mind that furnished him with that amusement which the generality of mankind are compelled to

seek extraneously ; and a solitary walk, in which he seemed thinking on nothing, would often produce something that would have been the laborious toil of the vigil and the lamp, to one who had been less sedulous in the improvement of time and opportunity.

To such a man, the deficiency of companionable qualities in a wife was—if he had been disposed to comment on the subject—a misfortune. ‘ There ’s something for you,’ when a man of letters comes home, and throws before his wife, a little effusion of poetry, or a neat translation of something in which he has permitted (and perhaps enabled) her to contend with him—are words that always announce a new pleasure, well worth some pain to acquire the power of relishing—and Maximilian was not of that school of husbands, who court inferiority in a wife for their own aggrandizement, or who prefer silliness or still life, as affording relaxation to their intensity of exertion:—he did not look for wit or genius—he would have asked only the fair improvement of what Nature had done; but this was not granted him. The woman with whom he was yoked, was not an excusable fool:—her cunning betrayed, in every instance, that it was to the mis-direction and mis-use of her faculties, that her defects were attributable ; and it was in her case, as in many others, true, that if

she had preserved an honest heart, she would have possessed a clearer head. As she stood equipped for her situation at present, every circumstance that distinguished her husband from the ordinary rank of his parishioners, was lost on her; and it was one of her many endeavours to torment him, to extol some smooth-tongued shop-keeper, or some inane clock-work husband, who asked his wife's pleasure before he said 'Yes' or 'No'—with an emphasis that said more than her tongue dared speak out. She did not see that, in this indulgence of her evil spirit, she only showed her own bad taste.

CHAPTER XV.

RETURNING home one day about the time specified, his spirits more than usually clouded by a visit to a cottage, where he had found griefs to which neither his purse nor his consolations would apply, the vicar was accosted, within sight of his house, by a young man of genteel figure and countenance, but whose clothes, originally good, seemed wearing out without prospect of succession: he wore a purely thoughtless face of good features, but no character; and there was a shambling in his gait and a negligence in his general deportment, that marked him as an unprofitable member of society. In coming up to Mr. Broderaye, who had no recollection of him, his features assumed a position of worse construction: they were disturbed by a vacant smile ready to be called into a laugh by any kindred folly, that it might have the good luck to meet—and it was then, and not till then, that Mr. Broderaye began to think he had once in his life seen some one resembling this gentleman, who now with some familiarity laying his hands on the vicar's shoulders, and staring him full in the face, uttered in a voice that parodied the wolf in

‘ Little Red Riding Hood,’ the very humorous query ‘ What, don’t you know me ?’

A little disconcerted by being received with politeness where he hoped for a frolic, he recovered his hands ; and unable to sustain his grimace, introduced himself, by the bare mention of his surname, Monterne—then, as if to assist in the recognition of himself, he added his Christian name, Leslie—and putting the two designations together, seemed to think that he had done enough to make himself known to all the world, as Leslie Monterne.

Mr. Broderaye’s failure of memory was pardonable, though the challenge claimed his acceptance : his acquaintance with Mr. Leslie Monterne had commenced very soon after his taking orders, and had existed only for one hour. It occurred, in consequence of a request from the rector of a little obscure parish, about fifty miles from London, whose curate having died suddenly, had left his flock in some inconvenience. Young Broderaye was asked to take this duty for a short time, till another curate arrived ; and complying with the request, and immediately setting himself to learn the state of the confusion in which the parish had been left, he found Mr. Leslie Monterne and a very pretty young lady, greatly embarrassed by having been out-asked in the church, and there

being on the spot no clergyman to marry them. On the first hint of this, he had professed himself ready to do what the parties wished ; and perhaps he had made more than the usual impression on the recollecting faculty of the young man, by owning that the duty demanded of him, he had never yet performed.

He now called to mind, with the general features of the circumstances, some peculiar feeling of his own on the occasion, which he then dared not indulge, and some awkwardnesses in the business which he would gladly have seen corrected. The bride, he remembered, was a lovely delicate young woman, so young in appearance, that the *tyro* of a parson, on considering what he had been doing, when it was too late to consider, blamed himself for having omitted to inquire whether he was justified in marrying her : she was elegantly dressed, but attended only by a female servant ; and not being provided with the representative of a parent, he had been obliged to select for this flattering office, one of the most sightly of the fathers of the village. The bridegroom bore, at the time, a much better appearance than now ; and Mr. Broderaye remembered the regret he had himself felt, when he handed the young lady into nothing better than an ordinary post-chaise from the next town. All together, he could not but think there was some-

thing clandestine in the business ; and this suspicion rendered him perfectly silent on the subject ever afterwards : he gave a second look at the register, that, in case of any question, he might recognise the parties by name ; but hearing nothing farther of Leslie Monterne and Caroline Vander-ryck, as the parties stood designated in the parish-record, he had dismissed the affair from his thoughts ; and it had not of late been brought to his remembrance.

‘ I hope the pretty lady whom I bestowed on you is well,’ said the vicar, when Mr. Monterne paused from a desultory recapitulation of irrelevant circumstances connected with his marriage, which he seemed to have great pleasure in detailing :—he had got as far as the horse-whipping he had given an insolent driver in the second stage of their journey ; and Mr. Broderaye had only been informed that his suspicion of a clandestine marriage was just—he now answered the question as to the health of his wife, by saying, ‘ Which way was you walking ?’

‘ Towards my home—in the direction you found me in.’

‘ I will walk with you.’

He linked his arm in the vicar’s ; and they walked on.

‘ Is Mrs. Monterne here in this village ?’ said Mr. Broderaye.

‘ O yes—we came but last night, and I was come out to look for a lodging, for your ale-house of an inn is abominably expensive, at least for poor folks—I did not know that you was bishop of this grand place—I don’t suppose even *you* can get much here, there isn’t much for any body I should think, but this great personage that lives over head there—she eats up every thing, I suppose.’

‘ Do you really want a lodging ?’

‘ O ! yes, we do indeed—Caroline desired me not to come back till I got one.’

‘ I think I can assist you,’ said the vicar—‘ tell me what accommodations you want.’

‘ O ! no matter just now—I’ll see after it as I go back—when I’m rid of you—I want just to talk to you—Caroline is not up yet—she won’t expect me—her cough has plagued her so ! I’m sure I’ve never closed my eyes since five o’clock this morning, and then it waked the child, and we had such a piece of work—Lord ha’ mercy upon me ! I don’t know I’m sure what we are to do—I’m sure if it was my own brother that was to ask my advice about marrying, I should say, “ Never think of it, till you can find a woman with ten thousand pound, and a good stout constitution ”—for as for depend-

ing upon an old miserly father, who would as soon part with a tooth as a pound, and having nothing but doctor's fees and 'pothecary's bills to pay, and nothing hardly to pay them with, it is the curse of one's life.—I was half mad when they told me that Caroline must come into Devonshire, and now we are a great deal too late; but I was forced to put it off, till we really could get a little money; but I said, if we must come, I would certainly come here, and try if the old woman over head—I suppose she is an old woman by now—would do any thing.'

'I cannot at all understand you,' said Mr. Broderaye—'you must indeed explain yourself, if you mean me to make you any answer.—I can only infer from what you say, what I am grieved to hear, that you have brought Mrs. Monterne hither very much an invalid—and I understand that you have a child.'

'O! yes, Caroline is as bad, I think, as she well can be, that is to say, to go about—and the journey did her no good; for we had no way of coming but by the stage, and it was very rough—I came on the box; and I declare I thought I should have been decanted coming down some of your—your hills here—and then, we had one horse for some miles, enough to pull a man's arm off—no holding him in at any rate—never saw such an

animal—a fine creature!—cost the man ninety guineas!—but no more of a mouth than one of those trees there—you might as well have tried to pull at your church.—And then we were forced to have a post-chaise for the last stage—Caroline, I believe though, was not sorry for that—for she did not much relish the stage-coach—as for me, I did not care a straw—it was all one to me, stage or chaise.’

‘ How old is your child ? ’

‘ Lord ! I don’t know—she was born within the year ; and we ’ve had two since, born at once, but thank Heaven ! they walked off again—and as for this, I think if she was wise, she would do so too.’

‘ And now,’ said Mr. Broderaye, ‘ do tell me in a way that I can understand, what you wish me to know. Can I do any thing for you or for Mrs. Monterne ?—my means are not great, but I am at home here—I have a wife—and any thing that we can offer——’

‘ Lord bless your soul ! ’ replied Leslie, ‘ what can *you* offer ?—here ’s a woman as ill as possible, and a child that is one person’s work to look after :—you’re very good—very kind indeed, but we must get a lodging, and do as well as we can—it won’t last long, in my opinion.—Good morning :—we shall meet again, I dare say—shall I come

and tell you how we speed? I say—who would have thought of our finding you in this dripping wet-blanket sort of a place?’

‘I shall be glad to know how you proceed,’ said Mr. Broderaye, ‘in case we can be of any assistance to Mrs. Monterne:—the weather, just now, is certainly very moist and relaxing; but we cannot have every thing in the same place—if you want a very mild air, you cannot have a sharp one:—our climate is rather famous.’

‘I can’t say it is to my mind—I feel absolutely good for nothing.—Good morning.’

Two questions the vicar had time to put to himself before he reached his own gate; the one, in what place such a man as Leslie Monterne could ever be otherwise than good for nothing—the other, what could in him be the attractive to the heart of such a young woman as his memory retained Miss Caroline Vanderryck to have been, when he did her the good office of throwing her away upon Leslie Monterne.—To this, he could answer only by referring to the young gentleman’s black eyes, which were finely formed and deeply shaded. The rest of his features, on unfolding themselves, were of a kind, that might have said any thing pensive and sentimental; but vacuity of mind had fairly overpowered expression, and they could now be ranked no higher than as the evacuated re-

sidence of something that could never be recalled.

At the most uncouth hour of the day—just when Mr. and Mrs. Broderaye were concluding their dinner, Mr. Leslie Monterne was announced, and scarcely waiting for the pronouncement of his name, was in the room and seated at the table, in a chair of his own placing: he seemed hardly able to tell whether he had or had not dined; but he took very cordially to the vicar's port-wine, and lauded it as an excellent antidote to the humidity of the atmosphere. When Mrs. Broderaye rose to go, he almost held her down on her chair, assuring her that 'the parson and he had no secrets;' but Mr. Broderaye's Angelica was in better training than to make use of his permission: she understood the vicar's look to say 'Go;' and whatever her inclination, she knew what was her prudence.

Leslie had to tell that he could not find any where, a lodging suited to his requisitions, and which could immediately receive him. He could, without taking the smallest blame to himself, state the very few minutes by which he had missed the most eligible in the place, and which would in every point have met his wishes, and more peculiarly his finances—these minutes he had lost by obstinate disregard of the business on which he set out,

and by trifling—and now he had made a bad bargain for what was much worse and as much dearer, and for which he must wait three days, subjecting his wife to great inconvenience in their present abode, and himself to all the imposition for which his folly, or rather his laziness in the use of his understanding, seemed purposely to lay out.

His detail was followed by observations on the superior comfort of the house he was then in, and a remark that there must be plenty of room in it.

It would have been a want of common prudence to understand this hint.—Mr. Broderaye therefore, as the young gentleman seemed quite at leisure, led back to those expressions which, in the conference of the morning, had induced him to suppose Mr. Leslie Monterne acquainted, at least by name, with Lady Lynford: he opened the business by saying that he understood him to have said that he had some interest with Baroness Lynford.

‘None upon earth,’ he replied—‘What I meant was, that I had what you may call an interest in this fine place, and that if the fine lofty madam that owns it, were down in your church-yard, instead of up there, I should have a greater, and not be at all displeased.’

Mr. Broderaye stared.

‘Why, did you never hear?—I thought you clergy knew every thing in your parishes—did you never hear of people having such things as cousins?’

The excitement of his curiosity, and the allowance to be made for natural deficiency of manners, made the vicar tolerate this unpropitiating style. He very civilly acknowledged that he had, before this time, heard of ‘people having such things as cousins,’ and gave way for Mr. Monterne to proceed, which he did by saying,

‘You must know, my grand-father Robert, who was a sad shack, though he was my grand-father—my mother’s father I mean—was cousin to the great lord—the father of this fine lofty madam.—Well, where was I?—O, at my grand-father Robert—his name, of course, was Beltravers, because he was my lord’s own first cousin by two fathers.’

‘How?’ said the vicar—‘I don’t quite comprehend.’

‘Why, I mean their fathers were brothers.’

‘O! now I understand you.’

‘Well, my grand-father—I can’t say much for him—he run through the little he had, in the navy; and I think, and so I’ve always said, he was taken in in marrying—at least, so it always appeared to me. But let that alone—he was not the first, nor

he won't be the last;—but every thing went to rack and ruin.—And he had one daughter, my mother, and, as the old lord had no other cousin, nor no brother, nor sister, you see all came very near!—and then when my mother died, I was next oars.'

'I had no idea of this.'

'But I should tell you, I forgot *that*:—my mother had a brother—an elder brother, born before her.'

'O! that makes a difference.'

'Why, yes, but not much, for he is dead;—I was just in mourning for him before I came down here, but Caroline desired me to leave it off—you know women have their notions—I dare say she thought, poor soul, I should want it for her.'

A bow sufficed here—and the uncle's death seemed to re-instate matters as they were before he was mentioned.

'Well, but,' pursued Leslie, 'this uncle of mine left a son, and he's living, but it is a poor little soul—not likely to trouble us long, and then we stand a good chance, if madam dies intestate, as they call it, or we could get into her good graces now she is a widow. You know, I suppose, the queer will her father made—she must not, for her life, marry a foreigner;—we should have had all the property directly, only just allow-

ing her five hundred a year—which would have been nothing, or next to nothing, you know.’

‘What gave Lady Lynford’s father such an aversion to a foreigner?’ said Mr. Broderaye—‘*my* father was a Frenchman—I therefore feel interested in such an exclusion.—Something very uncommon must have induced him to this.’

‘No, nothing I know of, but that he hated foreigners, and so do I—though we were always so poor that my mother was forced to keep beyond sea for cheapness; but we always lived among the English, wherever we were—I never would learn their language—I have lived, two years together, in French places, and never would learn one word of their gibberish.—As I told them, if they would not learn to speak *our* language, I would not learn *theirs*—so we were quits.—But, as I was saying, when we heard this great lady was married, mother sent me home to inquire; but, Lord! as I told her, it was of no use. She married a fine dashing fellow in the army—I fancy he was nobody though, of any birth,—but she took good care that we should have no chance—trust to her for that.’

‘Would it be agreeable, do you think, to Mrs. Monterne,’ said Mr. Broderaye, ‘to receive a visit from my wife or myself?—perhaps, if we

offered our services to her personally, we could more easily prevail on her to make us useful.'

'I don't know for that,' replied Leslie;—'*you* she might like very well to see, because she knows you; but as for your wife, I can say nothing—she's a pretty-looking woman too,—but, supposing I was to ask, and let you know; or to save trouble—for we've no servants—I'll put it in this way:—if you don't hear from me by ten o'clock to-morrow morning not to come, you may suppose you may come, and then you'll come at eleven—but don't bring your wife at first—you may come and see how the land lays, by yourself.'

With this gracious permission, which was not suspected by him who uttered it, to be uncivil, the gentlemen parted; and Mr. Broderaye, feeling some impatience to do a little more for a sick young woman than one so untrained as her husband seemed able to do, was not sorry when the limited hour, next morning, had passed without his receiving any prohibition of his intended civilities.

On arriving at the inn, which had little to boast but its situation, and a perfection of cleanliness which the vicar had taken great pains to encourage, he found that Leslie had not made sufficient exertion to procure for his wife even the best of its humble accommodations:—she had a small bed-

chamber, when a large one was vacant, and a dull sitting-room when a cheerful one was at hand. The trouble and fatigue of making the change, was pleaded by both, as a reason for being content, and both seemed to think any evil tolerable, but that of the want of society. Mrs. Monterne, ill as she was, and little able to hold conversation, affected great disappointment at the absence of Lady Lynford, and appeared neither to suspect that the vicar knew, nor to know herself, the very unapproximating terms on which her husband stood with his noble relation: she talked as if nothing but the baroness's presence was wanting to their perfect reception at St. Emeril's Court; and her whole external of decoration and behaviour was of the melancholy description which characterizes those labouring under the disease which was too evidently consuming her:—in despair of life, she talked of recovery, old age, and grand-children; and shocked at her own emaciation, she was dressed with all the contradicting advantages of superfluous decoration. She was still blooming; but it was not the bloom of health—she was lively; but it was the animation of fever; and it seemed one of her means of self-deception, almost to prompt the opinion she wished to hear given of her symptoms.—Mr. Broderaye's visit was accepted by Leslie as a hearty act of good fellow-

ship—he called his new friend ‘the doctor,’ and ‘the bishop,’ and pressed his stay.—Mrs. Monterne acknowledged it in a better style, and expressed impatience to see Mrs. Broderaye. The child, a lovely little being, two years and a half old, submitted to the vicar’s caresses, unappalled by his black coat; and when desired to tell her name, gave something so like ‘Careless Monkey,’ as to produce a most discouraging shout of laughter from her father, which entirely disconcerted her: mamma dried the tears of mortification which the feeling of ridicule had called forth, and explained the unintelligible name into Caroline Leslie Monterne; but in her endeavour to soothe the irritated feeling, there was such a mixture of reprehension that every other sentence opened afresh the wound, which that foregoing was designed to heal; and the child turned away from its parents, to the only one who had taken no part in the question. On her thus appealing to the vicar, he lifted her on his knee, and kindly talked down to her comprehension, or at least pitched his voice to a soothing tone.

The father still finding fresh cause for immoderate merriment at seeing ‘the doctor’ turned nurse; and mamma continuing her objurgatory lecture on ‘the impropriety’ of her daughter’s conduct, with threats of dismissal from her pre-

sence — the child, as if feeling safe where she was, made signs to her protector to wipe the tears from her eyes, and then made him understand that he must rock her in his arms—she gave him one smile, as if grateful for his compliance; and in a few seconds, the heaving of her little bosom subsided, and the infant ‘Carilis,’ as it appeared she meant to call herself, was fast asleep—the circumstance, though trivial, made an impression not to be obliterated; and if the vicar’s humanity and compassion could have needed a stimulus, it would have been found to the advantage of the parents, in this adhesive disposition of the little girl.

It was one of Mrs. Monterne’s well-days—she attributed marvellous effects to Devonshire-air: she was now ‘equal to any thing;’ and, as if excited by the favourable report her husband had made of the parsonage-house, she expressed rather more impatience than was really well-bred, to see it: then recollecting that an introduction to its mistress was a step previously necessary, she transferred her longing, and hoped Mrs. Broderaye would soon do her the favour to call on her:—‘In their present poor way,’ she added, ‘indeed, she ought not to wish to be seen—it was, altogether, very little like their house at Bath, from which they

came—but travellers and invalids must take up with what they could find;—as soon as ever she was quite well, as she was sure she now should be shortly, she should not let Leslie rest till he had got for her the very best house in the place; and she hoped it would be very near Mrs. Broderaye, for whom she felt a most affectionate *présentiment*.’

It was difficult to the vicar to play the proper bass to such an irregular composition of extreme tones; but when very much at a loss, there was the child to refer to, who still slept sweetly, and seemed not inclined to release him: his leisure was expiring; and he had made those promises for his wife, which Mrs. Monterne could not but be impatient to see in forwardness: she therefore undertook to detach little Carilis from his arms, and again, with the same sort of exhortatory language, with the addition of a little French, and concluding with the same denunciation of exile, tried her maternal powers—and with the same success.

The effect on herself was still greater than on the child: she was, in succession, indignant, angry, and at last in a passion, which bringing her cough in all its force, she was under the necessity of leaving the room. The father then began with

hallooing, clapping his hands, and skipping about the room.—It would have been subject of regret, could he have succeeded by such ill-adapted means—it would have been of less evil portent, had she been influenced by the excitation of pride and the operation of terror resorted to by the mother, than had she been exhilarated by the coarse folly of her father—but they were equally out of danger of doing any harm.—‘I think,’ said the vicar, ‘if you would trust me, I could get away from her without distressing her.’ Leave was granted for the experiment ; and he accomplished it very easily, by telling her gently, and in a way that she could comprehend, why he must go, and by promising that if she now behaved well, he would come again : she then suffered her father to take her, and to follow Mr. Broderaye to the door with her in his arms : she shook hands with her new friend, and repeating ‘that he would come again,’ she watched him out of sight and was pacified. If ever the vicar of St. Emeril joined in his wife’s regret in having no child, it was at this moment, when he thought he saw as much promise of good as an infant could manifest, and was convinced that, under such management it might, or rather *must*, be turned to any thing, except what might have been hoped.

What mode of training had rendered two young persons so ill fitted for the situation in which they had placed themselves, will be best explained by becoming acquainted with the father of the lady.

CHAPTER XVI.

MYNHEER Vanderryck, born a Dutchman, half German by early migration, a merchant by trade, and at last a resident in England, had, with honour and integrity, but with sordidness which nothing but early habit could have brought to such perfection, made an immense aggregate of wealth.—Nature had intended him to rise to a higher scale of virtue; but she had been out-bidden by Education. Still she reserved for her own acquittal, an odd sample or two of what she had designed; and even with all the disadvantages of his phlegmatic nature, he attached to himself those about him, by thinking and acting rightly wherever the early lessons of his youth did not influence him. He had been set out in life, unprovided with every thing, but an inoculated hunger after gain: he had done his utmost in the pursuit of it; and his utmost he would have done, in any better pursuit. His moral character had been left to form itself out of the sparings of the bias given him, and it included a regular species of self-denial, in him too easily practised to be deemed a virtue, and too much a habit to be stigmatized as an acquired vice.

The increase of his substance was as much considered in the restrictions of his household-expenditure, as in the active extension of his speculations; and he as duly consulted the skies when the slipshod foot-boy approached with the wooden coal-scuttle, as he did a vane in the neighbourhood, on his first rising in a morning, when his imperial argosies were on the ocean.

At twenty years of age, he was five-and-thirty in aspect and sedateness—and at thirty, he had advanced to fifty. At this period, he had married a pretty young woman, whom he found in the house where he had first lodged on trying his fortune in London.—It was a Robin-Gray match—but fortunately the ‘Jamie’ of *this* ballad did not again make his appearance; and the bride sate down submissively to her duties. On bringing her to the house he had taken for their residence, he showed her the room in which she was to pass her days. As it was only at meal-times that he could afford her his company, he left with her a Tom-cat, which he called his ‘best friend:’ he recommended to her the care of his and the household linen; and soon finding her deserving of his favour, he purchased for her of a sharp Jew-boy, that she might have something lively, a very pretty bull-finch, which, as he did not bring it away when he paid for it, never uttered a note.

The poor young woman, immured in smoke and darkness, lived only to give birth to a daughter, and died rejoicing that she was permitted to quit a world which had been poisoned to her in all its springs. Vanderryck was far from insensible to the calamity : he said little, but he felt deeply ; and however small the importance he seemed to attach to his wife's existence, the privation was grievous : if he saw her in the course of the day, only at meal-times, still he saw her then ; and the same domination of habit which had formed a selfish character, was now enlarging it into as much of the social as included his mate : he had not been blind to her passive merit, nor insensible to her usefulness as his house-keeper ; and he was not disturbed by any doubt of her happiness, though, in the one year of her marriage, not an hour's variety of occupation, or relaxation from it, had been suggested to her.—He looked at the infant, and asked it what he could do for it, answering himself in his habitual pronunciation, by the single word ' nothing '—and ' nothing ' indeed could he do, but summon to his aid, the lady whose good offices had, at last, overcome the deceased young woman's repugnance to marrying him, and who still, borne out by the conviction that wealth and happiness must be synonymous in the end, had offered her-

self as god-mother to this grand-child of persons whom she had patronized—and governed.

By this lady, whose name was Molecroft, and who, having nothing to do, was always occupied to excess, the babe was placed out to nurse, afterwards removed to a nursery-school, thence to a place of more advanced education, and lastly, after some calculation, to a perfecting-establishment affording such introductions as gave a good chance for a profitable alliance.

‘Vell! Mrs. Vat’s-your-name,’ said the Dutchman—‘I never can dink of de English names—if de leettle maidkin do not marry great, great, very great and rich, you know you pay me all de hoon-derts dat dis vill cost me.’

Mrs. Molecroft was too confident in her zeal, to be deterred from any risque. The ladies whom she wished to serve, were already much indebted to her patronage, and duly grateful for it: they were therefore ‘delightful people:’ any young person intrusted to their care, must succeed beyond all success hitherto known, in whatever a parent could wish; and as these friends were practising on their first set, there was no hazard of contradiction. When Mr. Vanderryck inquired how far attainments useful to himself, would be attended to, his query was smothered in general undertakings for every thing named or not named.

From this tan-pit of blooming virtues, Caroline came home, almost wholly a stranger to her father, and utterly unacquainted with his abode and its situation. She had been reared, in airy elegance, on the out-skirts of the western town, and had been accustomed to a daily drama of imitative etiquette, to prepare her for what it was supposed she would find or create at home. Every breach of rule was reproved by her teachers as militating against the observances which her father's house would exact; and 'What would Mr. Vanderryck say of *us*? What will he think of *our* plans?' were questions that always recalled her from aberrations, and stimulated her to raise herself higher, if possible, in her own self-importance, lest her best efforts should leave her below her requisite superiority.

Her associations at this emporium of merchantable elegance, had been, like the exhortations received there, all of an upward tendency; and great was Caroline's promise of pleasure in the hope of perpetual friendships, begun in these academic bowers, and cultivated under the roof, of which she was to be the mistress, or perhaps, she thought, the idol; for the ladies who had reared her affections, had not been wanting in their representations of the goodness that *must* characterize her dear papa; nor had they omitted his powers of

indulging to the extent of his wishes and hers, all the interesting attachment which he *must* feel to his daughter, when returned to him from the tuition of her friends.

Coloured thus highly, emancipation from even unfelt restraints, became matter of impatience in Caroline's mind; and though there was something to be relinquished in abandoning those who had been the instruments in fitting her for the happiness on which she was entering, and those who had been her friendly competitors, though she scarcely knew the person or hand-writing of her father, and had nothing but conjecture to guide her in her expectations, yet when her god-mother Mrs. Molecroft, on the day named for this great event, made her appearance as her escort, there could be no doubt in the mind of one so inexperienced and so tutored, that she was called to be a perfect object of envy.

While making her adieus, her acknowledgments, and her promises for farther patronage to 'the ladies,' Mrs. Molecroft was not aware of the whispers of the pupils, or the exhortations they were bestowing on their departing friend, to vindicate her own rights on all occasions, and to insist on what became one who had been educated with *them*. All promised to visit her at the first opportunities, as if to warn her that she would have

spies ; and by the time Mrs. Molecroft had ended her pretty speeches, Caroline was brought to a very good pitch of imaginary independence, and could take her seat in her friend's carriage, with the consolation of hope, and the conviction that she left no one behind her so happy as herself.

The coachman being better disposed to take the shortest, than the most polite ways, threaded narrow streets, lanes, and places with odd names, to an amount, a confusion, and a length of way, that seemed to have no end. At last, when she had lost almost the recollection of the *façades* of Marybone in the then-comparatively inelegant shop-windows, and the gloom of Bishopsgate-street, a very narrow turning brought them into the more dignified, but scarcely less adumbrated square, named from the noble house of Cavendish. Caroline was no judge of commercial magnificence : she saw no effect of comparison but what was odious, and with a sigh and a bitter recoil of heart, she entered that which she had fancied she must be proud to call ' her own house.'

She had been fetched early, at her father's desire, that he might see her before he went on 'Change, the hour for which was then three. And as, faithful to the habits of his country and his stomach, he suffered not the queasiness of hunger to interfere with the presence of mind there called

for, he adhered to the old hour of two for his dinner. Replies and rejoinders had made Mrs. Molecroft, unconsciously, less punctual than she had aimed at being ; and she expressed some alarm on the discovery ; but the four-feet-high he-scrub of the house, informing her that his master was in the 'compting-house, detained by business, she took heart, and proceeded forward up one broad flight of stairs, perhaps not much encouraged to look back on the countenance of her young friend, whom not even the goodly port of the staircase, or the massy style of the building, could hinder from audibly articulating, ' This is *too* bad.'

Mrs. Molecroft opening a dark-coloured door by a brass handle to the lock, little lower than her head, introduced Caroline to a room which perhaps, as the cloth was laid there, she might have described as the dining-room, had she not recollected that the many purposes to which it lent its capacities, and its vicinity to the 'compting-house, whose overflowings it occasionally received, left it without any specific denomination but that of ' the parlour.' A carpet worn to the stringy basis on which it was woven, too large for the floor, turned in at one end, and with one angle folded under, to accommodate the corner-chimney, merely disgusted the pupil of elegance, by its poverty and dirt, but to a scientific eye it said more: it betrayed that its

owner frequented sales in quest of half-worn goods—that he bought that which was unsuitable, because it was cheap, and yet grudged to fit it to its purpose, lest some other refinement in economy should convert the present inconvenience into a recommendation.

On the marble hearth was deposited the dinner, or at least the first course, which, served up without waiting, and geometrically placed on the tongs and poker to be kept tepid, seemed to be in expectation rather of the master than of a guest.

Mrs. Molecroft was forced to acknowledge what she could not deny—she owned herself disappointed, ‘after the assurances she had had from Mr. Vanderryck’—but ‘she was sure it was only the awkwardness of a man—she never saw any one in her life that knew how to do any thing decently.’

‘But had I known,’ cried the mortified damsel, ‘that I was to come to such a place as this!—Why didn’t you tell me?’

‘Of what use would telling have been?’

‘I would have died before I would have come.’

‘Do not be so hasty,’ said god-mamma—‘I will answer for your liking very well that which

belongs to this house and living here—whatever you think of the house itself.’

Caroline, without reply, had thrown herself on one of the ill-looking black leather chairs in an attitude of desperation, when, starting from it through fear either of dirt or a fall, she sprang against the door, just as her father, followed by a clerk to whom he was giving orders, pushed it open. Her indisposition to be pleased had made his entrance almost an act of aggression; and had he been able, at that moment, to see or hear any thing but a dishonoured bill and his clerk, he might have had to acquit himself of any ill intention before he grew acquainted with his daughter; but looking first at her conductress and then at her, as two things which he had expected, and which could wait his leisure, he despatched the more mercantile concern, and next addressed himself to the dishes at the fire, saying, ‘I don’t know witch wass my blate—I went in zuch a haste—I tought you vod not come, zo I told um to zend me my dinner, vor I do not lofe to wait—but diz man az poot me by—zo now vee may all dine togeder,—witch is my blate?—O! here is my bid o’ fish—come let uz put de dings on de dable.—Comm, Garline—you are de youngst.’

Mrs. Molecroft tried, by her own substituted assiduities, to screen her young friend—she was at liberty to do all the universal good in her nature;

for Caroline was stiffened in every joint ; and when her father looked at her, as if to ask if she was deaf, she could only burst into tears of passion and mortification.

‘ Let me take her to her room,’ said Mrs. Molecroft ; ‘ she is fatigued with the distance—it was a long ride for her.’

‘ Distanze !’ replied her father, looking over his shoulder at her as she retreated—‘ Vatiegued—Vat ? and comm in de coach ?—Wy, she must be zick.—Comm, comm—no dogtors here.’

Again, Mrs. Molecroft begged to retire with her to her apartment. Receiving no permission, she was at liberty to put her own construction on silence, and therefore ringing the bell, she begged that Miss Vanderryck’s maid might be sent to her.

The general-officer who had admitted the ladies, stared, and repeating such syllables as he could catch of a command that seemed unintelligible to him, he remained nailed to the floor.

‘ Yees, yees, Molly, zend Molly,’ said the old gentleman.

Molly came, and in her very entrance showed who was, at least, till now, mistress of the house—squalid at all times, and, at this moment, in all the garniture of *extra* and unwilling cookery, her habitual ill temper had received the same addition as

her person ; and, angry at being inconveniently summoned, she would only, in the most saucy surliness, let out that any body might find the room ; for it was the only one on the floor that had furniture in it.

At any rate, desirous to get rid of the restraint under which she was suffering, Caroline begged to go to her chamber, wherever it was ; and following her friend up many flights of stairs, she at last lighted on the room where her baggage was deposited.

The prophet's apartment in the house of the benevolent Shunamite, was hardly more simply furnished ; and the addition of London-hues to that which had never perhaps been vivid, made the whole a most dejectingly *sombre* scene. Even Mrs. Molecroft could now say nothing consolatory to Caroline, except that, would she but have patience till it was possible to mend appearances, she herself, if she saw in Mr. Vanderryck any want of regard to her comfort, would urge her return, and her permanent establishment again with the friends whom she had left.—She advised Caroline to consider herself, for the present, as at a very bad inn, and pledged her word for great improvements : she would have persuaded her to laugh ; but the matter was too serious in the estimation of any girl of

fashion ; and Caroline was, by nature, inclined to a pensive reception of the accidents of this life.

The endeavours to soothe, and the opposition to being soothed, lasted beyond any possible hour of dinner in such a house ; and Mrs. Molecroft being under the necessity of returning to her own home, Caroline, in deep affliction, was left to expect her father's coming in from 'Change, and to wait for any refreshment till the early hour at which the ladies learnt he took his coffee. Had solitude been tolerable, she would have excused herself from the renewal of this meeting ; but any thing appearing better than the state in which she was left, she sought again the chair she had sprung from in the parlour, and awaited her father's leisure to seek her.

He came at the same moment with the apparatus of his repast ; and Caroline having, perhaps to make the contrast a little more striking, dressed herself in the best style of her place of education, endeavoured, on his entrance, to show him, at least, what she thought due to herself.

This was not without its effect. As she rose on his approaching her, with more of ceremony than cordiality, he, to all appearance involuntarily, moved his hat, which he had still on his head. He looked at her with an attention undisturbed even by the arrival of the coffee-pot itself ; and

going nearer to her, took her by the arm saying, 'Durn do de light.'

Caroline had not been residing in a house without mirrors or appreciators—she did not shrink from being looked at; and as a mean to enforce the claims which she was not inclined to forego, she was not sorry to be called to this obedience. She had not, indeed, raised her expectations as to any effect of the survey, to a height that could subject her to much farther mortification; but, even displeased as she was at her strange reception, she might have been almost induced to smile at her father's concluding his view by the unqualified protestation that 'she wass very britty,'—but such an unexpected alteration appeared in his features, as he said this, that her attention was arrested. A large tear rolled from each eye down his puckered cheeks.—'Your mudder—your mudder wass an angel, Garline, and you are very very like her. Comm to de coffee; it will be cold—and coffee is not goot if it be not hot.'

He officiated at the table; but carefully looking into the coffee-pot to see that there was enough for his companion.—He even offered her white sugar, as he fetched that which was neither white nor sugar, but brown sugar-candy, out of a little cupboard in the wainscot-pannel: he stood the stare of the foot-boy, when he ordered more bread

and butter!—he sate down opposite to his daughter, and wiped his eyes.

There was sentiment in this; and Caroline began to reconcile herself, under the fancied semblance of romance, to that which, in its reality, she had deemed intolerable.—The coffee and Caroline's dinner despatched at once, Mr. Vanderryck sent orders into his 'compting-house, instead of attending there in person, and sate down as if desirous to converse with his daughter.

'My shile,' said he, as soon as he had finished the neat tying-up of papers which he had opened to give his orders—'you and I do know very littel of one and de oder.—I did not know myzelf, I should care about you;—but, Garline, when a man zuch as me, do feel—it is do—do his very heart.—We do not feel all dings—de money employ us; and de money comforte us—and I might say now "Dere is my money—what ail me?" but your mudder was an angel—she die—and I was force den to zay, "Why here is my money still!" My shile, you are now come to live wid me—you are come to a fader's house, and it muss be a fader's house to you—it is not de fashion house—I cannot make it de fashion house—but I muss live here—I cannot live in anoder—and I do not lofe de paint and de scrubbing; but I can make you very happy wid money.—Your mudder was an angel; and she

die ; and zometimes I have tink dat London killed her—I zometimes do wish I had had a coach to carry her out a littel, poor ting.—You shall have a coach, Garline—you are sixteen, and can take care of yourself, wid dat Mrs. Molecroft—you shall have de money, and do vat you like—I muss lofe de money more dan ever, for you ; but I zall spend it for you too.—You muss let me have my times and my littel ways, and den you zall have yours—in reason as I say.’

Caroline bowed politely, as if condescending to accept that which she claimed, and yet fearful of pledging herself to be pleased ; and she was just endangering all her prospects by an interesting representation of the charms of the house from whence she came, when happily Mrs. Molecroft, whose anxiety would not suffer her to remain at a distance, and in ignorance of Caroline’s proceedings, announced herself at the door of the apartment.

Mr. Vanderryck, not at all displeased to see her, repeated with more method, his liberal intentions towards his daughter ; and his offers were soon talked into a form that, with the assistance of this kind god-mother, promised all that circumstances would admit of, for the comfort of the young lady, who in a short time saw herself constituted mistress of the house, with much more indulgence of her wishes, and relaxation of vigilance, than were

wholesome. Mrs. Molecroft smoothed every thing, and talked largely of the notice Caroline attracted in the various large assemblies to which she introduced her ; while, on the other hand, she coaxed the young lady into submission to small evils.—Mr. Vanderryck's hours suited admirably those which she called hers. He was often in bed before she went out in the evening ; and provided she appeared at his meals and looked pretty, all was well. But her education was infinitely above the sordid cares to which she was called ; and the power of teaching herself that which she did not already know, was not included in the many attainments she had brought home. This was soon detected by a master of a family, who, under the necessary habit of a 'compting-house, had been accustomed to the analysis of every branch of domestic expense, and who considered the buying any thing too dear, not as it increased the individual price, but as it would, in an infinite multiplication of instances, enhance loss :—if a birch-broom was charged one halfpenny beyond its current price, he argued on the thousand halfpence in a thousand birch-brooms ; and if an excisable article was overcharged, he had the means of detecting the fallacy of urging any increase in the duty.

All this was grievous to Caroline ; and though

at the moment under her father's warm prejudice in her favour, a little management might have been useful to her, the thing was too odious in her opinion to admit of attempts to mend it. After some altercation she disdainfully threw up the keys and the account-book ; and by this exoneration of herself from all responsibility, she became in effect and in estimation, the subaltern of the old housekeeper, who lost no opportunity of displaying the superiority of her administration.

But the Dutchman's daughter was still like her mother ; and the recollection and the association of ideas were still powerful on his mind. Her mother was remembered only in her bloom and its early fading. Every remembrance of her was sweet—every feeling was tender :—she had never palled on the sense : she had never thwarted ; she had never offended :—and it required some little conviction on experience, to teach the fond father, that one so resembling her, could thwart or offend.

CHAPTER XVII.

PERPETUALLY goaded by her young friends into discontent, Miss Vanderryck, in a few months, sunk into something that, but for the admixture of sentiment, might have been named sullenness, but which, stamped by her natural character, turned into a sort of dejection very interesting to herself and her partizans, but very little conducing to her own health or the comfort of her indulgent parent.

The young lady was on the sharp look-out for causes of uneasiness; and her kind friend, Mrs. Molecroft, was nearly weary of palliating and coaxing, when Mr. Leslie Monterne, in consequence of the death of his mother, came to England to look after the family-interests, and some money-transactions obliged him to have several interviews with Mr. Vanderryck.

Totally unlike any thing that ever appeared in a 'compting-house, troublesome, by an unfeeling spirit of interruption, utterly unacquainted with all forms of business, needing to be taught the lowest principles, yet always distrusting the information given him, and making endless inqui-

ries, the clerks were so annoyed by him that they omitted nothing that could discourage his calls ; and to get rid of him, while waiting to see their principal, they would, when the parlour was vacant, send him thither to wait : he had never crossed Miss Vanderryck's path ; and as the room in which he was put out of the way, was that which she never voluntarily entered, there would have been little danger of their meeting, but for an industrious whim that seized him during his stay in London, and which betrayed his retreat and excited curiosity.

The young man, notwithstanding all the appearances which he exhibited against himself, was not devoid of taste or faculties : at a public school where he had been educated, he had shown himself capable of doing any thing, except applying : driven to the last minute by neglect, he would do that in a hurry and well, which other boys, with plodding industry, and taking time before-hand, failed in accomplishing with any credit ; —and in his recreations, he showed the same lazy disposition, and the same power of fetching up his distance :—he had a natural taste for drawing, which he would not improve or even exercise, but by starts ; and he had an exquisite feeling of music, which enabled him to sing with pathos, and to perform by ear, on the flute or the flageolet, simple

airs, which he embellished in a wild way that gave them the charm of novelty and the graces of expression. But in these relaxations, which would have been of great value if used properly, there was such irregularity of pursuit and such caprice of neglect, that those living in habits of intimacy with him, were subject at some times to be disturbed by his intemperate vehemence, and at others to be mortified by his refusals to bring forward his powers of amusing.

It was now the flageolet-fit that was on, when he was occasionally disposed of in the parlour of Mr. Vanderryck ;—and the instrument being very portable, and nothing in the room calling off his attention, or in his own mind warning him that he was guilty of impropriety, he amused himself with this pretty piping. Caroline, whose sitting-room was at some distance, had heard it, but, concluding it was out of the house, had paid it little attention ; till, one day, passing the door of the room to go to her carriage, she was led to suspect that the musician was near, and was induced to stop and listen. Recollecting that one of her young female friends had been trying the flageolet, and concluding that some surprise was intended for her, she unhesitatingly threw herself into the room, and there saw the black-eyed youth, standing in a picturesque posture, leaning against the

wainscot: he scarcely started: the young lady knew she must retreat; but she stopped to explain her mistake, and then, while drawing on her gloves, she paid a compliment to his performance, and entered into a little conversation on music, which of course was a leading feature in her accomplishments.—The pretty *rencontre* was over before Leslie was recalled to the scene of business; and having given him a hint not to mention it, she got into her carriage with some curiosity to know who this black-eyed youth could be. It was very easy to satisfy herself: a plain statement of an unimportant circumstance, and a very natural question, would have answered every purpose; but Caroline was just at an age to mould a common incident into a romance: she therefore preferred waiting for satisfaction, and contriving it by some circuitous mode, to obtaining it by the ready straight-forward path of asking a question in the house: her request for the young man's secrecy, had spread an idea of continued concealment over her own mind; and she promised herself the pleasure of talking over this most extraordinary adventure, with a bosom friend, while she could add to her recital the interest of wonder. But even to do this, required caution; for the stranger had in the plainest way accounted for his being found in this situation; and any allusion to 'business'

—any repetition of his simple excuse, ‘that the ‘compting-house was full of people,’ was to be avoided: all this, by having time to think, she could generalize out of sight; and fortunate in finding her friend at home, and at leisure to listen, she had her full indulgence in the detail of the youth’s attractions.

Two sisters were present at the recital; the one three years older than the other: the younger sate open-mouthed, scarcely breathing under the seeming expectation that the flageolet-player would turn out an oriental prince: the elder seemed hackneyed in ‘tales of the heart,’ and to see through to the end of them from the first syllable:—she replied very coolly, ‘I dare say it was Leslie Monterne; for he has been here this morning, and he said he was going into the city.’

‘Law!’ exclaimed the younger sister, ‘and is that all?—Only Leslie Monterne!—how ridiculous he is making himself with his flageolet!—I expect soon to meet him with it in his mouth in Bond-street.’

Miss Vanderryck looked mortified.

The elder of the ladies, as if to raise her again to her former buoyancy, by depressing her own younger sister, began to eulogize the person, taste, temper, and fashion of Leslie Monterne:—she even dwelt upon his name as charming; and Miss

Vanderryck's affections were in haste passing upward from the sister, who had been her fellow-disciple, to her who praised what she wished to hear recommended to her partiality.

The younger sister was soon silenced; and Mr. Leslie Monterne stood in high decoration of family, fashion, and good-nature—the only requisites in such a case:—Caroline was asked if she should be at the Saturday's opera: she could say, 'Yes, certainly,' for she knew it was Mrs. Molecroft's engagement for that evening—and the *very* hearty shakes of the hand and squeezes of the fingers, which the little sister of the family used to engross, were transferred to the elder, while a nod sufficed for the younger.

No idea of any possible consequence from the trifling event of the morning, would have entered the head of young Monterne, had it not been introduced by the lady's requesting his silence on their having met. In the 'compting-house he had entirely forgotten the restraint laid upon him, and had asked one of the clerks who that fine girl was, who had come into the room where he had waited: he had been answered, and without any suspicion; for, universally contemned as he was by all the men of business, he appeared in their eyes equally contemptible to all the world.

The tone of kindness in which Leslie had been

described by Miss Vanderryck's best informant, had, without an explicit word on the subject, conveyed to her mind the persuasion that he was not rich ;—and that she must not look on any one as a lover, who stood in this predicament, her father's frequent expression and every indication about him, declared. Mrs. Molecroft, with all her fondness for her god-daughter, had proved herself too much disposed to justice, to admit a hope of her joining in any scheme of a desperate nature. When, therefore, Mr. Leslie Monterne showed himself, on the following Saturday evening, in the opera-house, there was no farther use to be made of the opportunity, than to keep up the spirit of romance, and to heighten the interest of clandestine proceeding ; but opportunities now occurred of more efficacious meeting : the good offices of Leslie's advocate were not wanting ;—invitations to little musical-evenings and morning-practices, were easily contrived ; and these were followed by similar parties at Miss Vanderryck's, in which her assisting friends contrived to raise the valuation of Mr. Leslie Monterne in the 'compting-house, by introducing him as their property, in the drawing-room, without even exciting the vigilance of Mrs. Molecroft, who accepted him under the supposition and firm persuasion, that he was engaged to the younger of the two ladies, mis-led by the

almost over-acted enthusiasm with which she had kindly undertaken to forward her sister's views for the advantage of Leslie Monterne, who was, with all his female friends, 'so good a creature,' that there was not one who did not contribute every thing in her power towards spoiling him.

The affair was proceeding in the usual course, by the usual means, and at the usual pace of such affairs, and Caroline found herself in that novel state of interesting existence, the end of which is impatiently looked for, while protraction is courted, when the failure in her liveliness, her increasing dis-relish of gay amusements, and the fading of her complexion, attracted her god-mother's notice and concern.—One summer had passed, and she had, for a part of it, taken Miss Vanderryck out of London—another was arrived, and she was ready to perform the same deed of charity, but the offer of it was not received as before : it was declined with a request that the proposition might not be made to her father.

This calling for explanation, the whole matter came forth, and was heard by Mrs. Molecroft with very great lenity and a full proportion of proper allowance ; but when she was in possession of facts and circumstances, she could give little encouragement. It was not to be denied that a much more surprising ebullition of kind affection than even

that which had procured Caroline so many indulgences and so much consideration, was requisite to make Mr. Vanderryck endure the mention of the lounging Leslie Monterne, known to him only as the pest of the clerks, for his son-in-law. The young lady thought differently : she not only recollected, but had already assured Leslie of her father's uniform disposition to yield to her wishes : —she had now persuaded herself that she had only to dress well and look like her mother, to carry any point on which she was determined. All she asked of her god-mother, was to open the matter for her in a propitiating way, and to represent advantageously dear Leslie's very near relation to wealth and title. Mrs. Molecroft declining the commission all together, and not choosing even to promise her influence after the matter should be broached, Caroline in an instant forgot all that she owed to the voluntary kindness of her friend ; and insultingly congratulating herself on that improvement in her judgment, which, by taking away her taste for pleasure, rendered her god-mother's attendance on her unnecessary, she made a breach which nothing but a very improbable repentance could have healed. Conciliating overtures were, with more tenderness than good sense, made by Mrs. Molecroft : they were the kind offspring of an unwillingness to leave the delicate girl in a

situation that might seriously injure her health ; but they served only to give a voice to ungrateful feelings ; and Mrs. Molecroft went out of town with no other hope than that the firm refusal of Mr. Vanderryck to bestow his daughter so unprofitably, might bring her to her senses.

Freed from all *espionage*, all fear, and all responsibility, Caroline now threw herself on the generosity of Monterne, claiming his praise for her fortitude and costly attachment. He could only echo her words—he had none of his own ; but meetings, visits, billets, and the flageolet, held out, and Miss Vanderryck grew thinner, paler, and either more interesting or more interested every day. There was danger enough of papa's hearing how much of his time Mr. Leslie Monterne passed in Devonshire-square, to keep apprehension agreeably alive ; but against this, she had taken due precautions : she far out-bribed her father in securing those servants over whom he had control ; and her own maid was trusty ; and Molly, though still in the supreme magistracy of the kitchen, which was in the upper story, knew nothing of what passed in the lower part of the house.

The two sisters who so warmly espoused Leslie's cause, had afforded every accommodation in their power, as long as they remained in town ;

and their departure, though fashionably late, was surprise and dismay to one so indebted as was Miss Vanderryck to their kind interventions. The common adieus did not suffice at parting :—a sonnet expressed ‘ the pangs of severed friendship,’ and the agony of being thrown ‘ unshielded by its ægis’ on the ‘ burning darts of Cupid :’ the sense somewhat running over, a triplet concluded the effusion : it was a dainty performance, but destined to an untimely fate ; for, in its way, it escaped from the waistcoat-pocket of the hare-brained lover, who had been the bearer, and being picked up by a chimney-sweeper, was carried by him for decyphering, into the nearest shop, from whence he obtained the information necessary to restoring it. Miss Vanderryck’s footman brought it to her on a silver waiter : she was very excusable in her repugnance to acknowledge any thing of such a hue ; but once made sensible that it was her property, she ransomed it with a shilling, and, at the first opportunity, burning it, she suffered her mortification or her tenderness to acquit dear Leslie, and to pass over the delinquency in silence.

A substitution for the mediation of her obliging friends in their absence, was indispensibly requisite ; and after a little thought, Caroline arranged what appeared to her an unexceptionable plan. There was one clerk in her father’s ‘compt-

ing-house, of the name of Chalier, who, in the most private way, and well knowing that discovery would be ruin to him with his employer, had, through the medium of her maid, furnished her with contraband delicacies of dress. To this man, she commissioned Leslie to address himself, for connivance at his directing, under cover to him, and for forwarding his billets.

Her orders were executed almost too quickly to admit of mistake or neglect ; but her thoughtless messenger, translating the name Chalier into Shelly, and the head-clerk being of that name, applied to the wrong agent : he did not however receive positive discouragement : he accepted a nod as a promise, and went away satisfied. No immediate necessity of writing to his fair one, pressed ; and Mr. Shelly, who disdained the employment, and was yet, as the father of a family, equally unwilling to make a breach between a parent and child, or to promote a clandestine intercourse, had time to think how he might so act, as to save his own feelings, prevent mischief to his master's daughter, and secure himself from the risque of loss, so often incurred, by an honest endeavour to do right.

Intrusting his anxiety to his wife, they agreed on the expediency of informing Mr. Vanderryck of some danger, without specification ; and Mrs.

Shelly wrote a note which her husband could place safely, with other confidential papers, in Mr. Vanderryck's sight, without danger of its being seen by others: merchants' clerks brought in many such, which had a particular depository. The note contained only these words: 'An attempt has been made, in which a young lady, very dear to you, is concerned, to induce one of your clerks to do what you must highly disapprove.'

But this hardly answered the intent; and it would have been difficult to find a method such as was needed, if Mr. Monterne had not, while the communication was withheld, come into the 'compting-house, in his idle careless way, and passing Chalier and addressing himself to Mr. Shelly, given him a letter for Miss Vanderryck, which, as he meant to be his own postman, he had seen no reason to put into a second envelope. Mr. Shelly took it in silence, and placed it in his pocket-book, Chalier observing all that was passing, and Leslie, perceiving it, winking at him, with an intimation that betrayed the nature of what he was so unguardedly negotiating.

Mr. Shelly now saw a mean of doing what he wanted, and of having that extorted from him, which he wished to disclose:—against Mr. Vanderryck's subsequent displeasure, if he should suspect him of connivance, he had a security in the

ability to refer to the note which he had induced his wife to write, and which he knew must acquit him ;—that the father's indulgence should lean to the daughter in such a case, was not very probable. He therefore desired his wife to add that the pocket-book of one of his clerks would divulge the name of the person acted on.—The note was placed, with the delay of two days, which would assist in convincing Vanderryck that his clerk, though he had received the letter, was not inclined to further it on its way.

But the train missed fire. If the Dutchman was shrewd, it was without any admixture of comprehensiveness of mind. Every where, but at his desk, or on the Exchange, he might have been imposed on like the Arlequin of Florian : he saw a very little way before him, except in his diurnal track ; and in no other did he often look. He could indeed, by the same tuition of experience as that of a shepherd on Marlborough-downs, when asked what the elements predict, foretell peace or war : he knew mankind in the world of money and politics, and had, at times, developed latent purposes which had escaped more erudite men ;—but that his ' Garline,' however vexed he might sometimes be with the notions put into her head by ' dad Meestriz Vat's-her-name,' could find reason for concealing any thing from him,

astonished him : 'he knew nothing she could want or wish for, which she might not have of him for asking.'

Casting about in his puzzled mind, to find out what this could be, he soon congratulated himself on having guessed it. He had opposed her in her desire to purchase a ticket in the lottery : he had, on paper, shown her clearly, how many were the chances in favour of a blank—she had submitted, but, he saw, without conviction :—this, therefore, he concluded, was the negotiation ; and, instead of being angry at it, he told himself that he would indulge her—he only wished to know that she still retained her longing, and this, he thought, he could best learn from her maid. He therefore called this very fine lady privately into his presence.

She came ; and on sight of her, he was moved by her appearance, to bow to her, as he had done to his daughter on the first sight. The damsel looked at the door as he shut it, as if she feared being made a prisoner ; but soon recovering her composure, she was sufficiently at ease, to frame her speech to the sentimental slip-sloppery of her profession. To his awkward exhortations to her to tell the truth and fear nothing, she replied, by expressing her 'universal love for being ingenious,' and her 'conference,' that she had nothing to 're-

prehend' from a gentleman of so much 'vilanthrophy.' The catechising began :

' Do you know, Meess Vat's-your-name, vat it is as my daughter Garline wands one of my glerks to do ?'

' To do, Sir ? Miss Vanderryck, Sir ? One of your clerks to do, Sir ?'

' Yes—she wands one of 'em to do somevat dat I gan bedder do for her.—Is it aboud de—de—de—you know vat—I gan dell *you*, iv you vill nod dell *me*.—Iv you dell me drue, you may be de bedder vor it.'

' What, I suppose, Sir, you mean about the shawl—or do you mean the taffety?—I do not think she will get either—the taffety is such a difficult colour—and, giving a pattern of the shade is not the way to get it—I sent it, above a fortnight ago ; and we have heard nothing of it from Mr. Chalier—I can give you another cutting, if you please ; but as for the shawl, I am afraid it is gone.'

' De shawl !—Meestir Chalier !'—repeated Vanderryck, staring.

' Yes, Sir. It is Mr. Chalier who gets the things for my mistress.—You said you could tell me—so I supposed you know'd—and now I am afraid I am wrong, and shall have anger.'

The Dutchman made no reply : he went to—

wards the door, opened it, went out, and turning the key, left his daughter's fine maid a prisoner, telling her to remain there till he sent for her.

He then went into the portion of his 'compting-house, more peculiarly his own situation, and calling his, or rather his daughter's footman, ordered him 'to tell Garline' to come to him.

Such an order had never before been issued—Miss Vanderryck had never set her foot in the 'compting-house: and, so far from obeying, she sent to know what her father meant.

'I mean vat I zay—Garline is to come here.'

She came——'It is all out,' thought she—'Glad I am at any rate.'

But her opinion changed, when her father, whose sternness of manner she could have defied on such an occasion, ordered all his clerks to come round him, and giving the key of the room in which he had imprisoned the waiting-gentlewoman, whose name he did not know, but whom he described as 'Meess,' he directed the footman to fetch her.—The command was not intelligible, till he explained it by saying, 'de Meess as do pud de vinery on Garline.'

All assembled, the room bore the appearance of a court of justice, and with little less ceremony than that befitting a judge, he prepared himself to speak, to all appearance forgetful of all consider-

ation for his daughter. Proceeding, not on Mr. Shelly's plan, but on the information which he had obtained from Caroline's maid, he addressed himself first to her astonished mistress.

'Garline,' said he, 'you av know my gommand do you, nod do buy or do wear de schmuggle good—you ave disobey me—you av employ my own glerk do buy you de schmuggle good, and I am very very angry ad id.—Now I vill nod be interrupt vile I speak—I speak do all—I game indo diss happy gountry, bud, as I may say, a boor man, as to vat I am now—I ave god my money under a mild and goot governmend—a governmend dat prodict widdout oppressing—and wich you may live to zee—vor I shall not—triumphand over doze who wish its downvall—diss governmend, as it do prodict its subgicks, must be idself zupported—fed—maindain—id gannot live on notting—wich of uz gan?—ids daxes, ids gusdoms, ids egcise, is ids bread and mead and drink. Now iv you, Garline, who is ids shild, help to rob id ov ids maindain, you are bad shild—and so I av dold you before.—But iv *I* who is nod ids shild, bud av been made rich as iv I was ids shild, do dis or zuffer id do be done, I am den a base ungradeful robber—I rob de hand dat veed me, ven I had no right to be ved—and I lose my garagter; an de

world zay, " Vandderryck is a hypogrid—Vanderryck is a schmuggler.' "

Caroline affected to smile through a scene that appeared to her sufficiently ridiculous; but she had no encouragement from the countenances in sight. She tried to stop her father, and to gain his attention to what she could say, but in vain.

He next addressed himself to Chalier.

' Yong gentleman,' he said, ' my dawder perhap may be much oblige do you for your goodness in helping her to dress vine, and I doo like to zee her vine—but I do not veel *myz*elf ad all oblige to you vor do ruin my garagter.—My glerks az, dill now, gone vree as de day light—no zearch, no guestion, begause dey wass Vanderryck's glerks, an now dey shall be stop, an zearch, an guestion, begause dey *is* Vanderryck's glerks.—Meestir Chalier, you ave give me gread offence—I did dell you, an all my yong men, dat I vill ave no conterband dealing.—My glerks is know vor honest men, as vell as dere master, an I vill not ave my garagter made black by dem.—Dare is your hat, Meestir Chalier—give me your keys—you are no more in my gounding-ouse.'

Caroline would have entreated; but Mr. Chalier indignantly requested her to forbear—' I am to conclude, I suppose, Miss Vanderryck, that you have yourself betrayed me—I dare say you

might not foresee that such extreme severity would be the consequence to me——’

She was going to protest, but her father ordered her and her maid to retire. The young man, too much prejudiced to be just, and too much exasperated to be generous, and as if determined to do all the mischief in his power before he yielded, reaching his hat, and putting it on his head, in a posture of defiance, and turning his look, in a directing manner, towards Shelly, as soon as the lady was departed, said to Mr. Vanderryck, ‘*I am turned out of your ’counting-house for a bit of silk; and here’s your favourite Shelly made the carrier of letters between a young fellow and your daughter, and I suppose will be thanked for what he does.*’

‘*O fie! fie! Chalier,*’ said Mr. Shelly, fixing his eyes on Vanderryck, as if expecting to see him expiring under the blow—but he stood it firmly: Mr. Chalier retreated—the other clerks in delicacy withdrew from this merely domestic scene; and on a sign given him not to go, Mr. Shelly remained with his master, who in less than a hour was in perfect composure, in possession of the secret, and yet able to seek his daughter; and when Shelly, scarcely daring to trust him to his own feelings, would have persuaded him to spare himself, he could reply with a spirit that would not

have disgraced the best consular age of Rome, 'No, no, my goot friend—I can bear diss—diss only break my rest—de oder ruin my garagter.'

Having found Caroline, and found her in a very ill-humour, he first put the home-questions to her, whether he was not master of his house, or at least of his 'counting-house ; and on her acknowledgment of this right, he, in the most positive terms, insisted on her submission to his will, under the heavy penalty of all his indulgences. Acting the part of a judicious father, merely under the prompting of his tender affection, he forbore to bring forward, at the present moment, what it was his purpose to say to her, but suffered his day to be embittered and his night sleepless, rather than he would subject himself to see the action of accumulated distress on the pretty features of his Garline.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OCCUPIED as were Miss Vanderryck's thoughts with her great concern, the smaller one of Mr. Chaliér's dismissal, especially as he had, to her surprise, conveyed no billet to her from Leslie, soon ceased to distress her; and not thinking it prudent to provoke her father when she herself was not provoked, she rose next morning in an obliging humour—her maid had explained every thing.—Silks and shawls were trifling considerations compared with some others; and she was determined to be remarkably agreeable at breakfast;—the accident of the previous day might even be made a furtherance to her wishes, as she could quote her ready submission to her father, and, on the strength of it, almost demand his to her.

She was in the parlour some minutes before her presence was requisite; and on hearing her father's footstep, she looked in the narrow strip of glass, and was satisfied.

But her father's countenance alarmed her—not for his health—on that point, she had no weak apprehensions, but he looked disturbed—a storm had gathered on his forehead; and she began to

guess that it was to burst on her.—Chalier might have betrayed her most important secret—there was good to be extracted even from this:—she was now prepared, and stood erect and firm to meet any attack.

‘ My shild,’ said her father, ‘ sid down—I do not like you to stand, ven I have do say de desagreble dings — I a’ had no zleep de night, Garline, not von vink—and all vor you, my shild.’

‘ I am sorry, Sir—but—— ’

‘ I vill dell you zometing, my shild—dare as been von gread fault in your edugation, Garline. You ave nod been daught ow de shild should behave do de fader—de vader dat lofe de shild do his heart, vile he zeem only do be lofing de mooney.—Doze beeble, vich broughd you up, should ave daughtd you de dudy. I daughtd dey wass do deach you every ding—bud dey zeem do ave left diss out of dare fine doings.—Dey should av deach you, Garline, to veare me, iv nod to lofe me.—I don’d know vat books do deach zuch dings now. I did read a liddel in dad vine book of yours, dad smells zo gran, by Meestriz Vat’s-her-name, one day, but id did nod zeem to me to be in dad—dough I did look for the vort *dudy* in de lisd. Vee in Holland av de Bibles—very goot Bibles, dat deach it, I know :—you shall av one—id vill be good ding vor you. But, Gar-

line, I wass nod daughd—I 'ad nobody do deach me—I 'ad no dime vor de Bible—I woork very hard—bud den I minded—and I vound dad iv I voud av my own vay, de oder beeble vout av deirs—zo I dried to vind oud vat wass besd vor man and besd vor God, an dad ven I wass mind my inderesd, I vass do my dudy. Den I zaid, “Vy nod give me de Bible ad once?”—dad is de good way. An zo, I zay you should av ad de Bible—id zave gread deal drouble.’

Miss Vanderryck shifted her posture, and snifted in a manner expressive of the contempt which wise inexperience bestows on antiquated goodness, and of the insolence of that submission which self-interest alone restrains from rebellion. Her thoughts flew back to those who had not trained her on ‘these despicable principles;’ and pity for herself made her resolve to appeal to that of Leslie Monterne.

‘Now diss, my shild,’ proceeded Vanderryck to say, ‘is all about dudy and wad you should mind; bud I av a liddel more do zay.—I am nod angry; bud I am zorry.—I hear, Garline, you av god a lofer. Now, my shild, I do nod ask diss; begause de yong oman duz nod like juz do zay “Yez.” I gannod, in reason, be angry dad you av a lofer—vor you are very briddy, and like your mudder, an she vass an angel. Iv she ad

live, I should ave no drouble now.—Bud I hear your lofer is dat idle idle man, yong Monterne, who all my yong men do laugh ad—he is zo idle and voolish! Now, I dare zay, Garline, you zuppose I dislike de yong man begause he 'ave nod de money—No, no—I ad once nod de money myself—bud I ged it; an if your lofer ood nod be de idle idle man, bud ood gome into de 'gompting-ouse and work,—I would say, if you lofe him an he ood be good to my shild, “Take my Garline and gome indo de 'gompting-house—you shall ave de quarter now, and all when I doi.—Gan you nod, Garline, zay diss do your lofer?—you are zo briddy dad he would hear *you*—bud nod *me* perhap.’

With good sense, prudence, and filial duty, so equal that it was difficult to say of which there was the largest portion, Miss Vanderryck rose from her seat, turned her back on her father, and taking out her handkerchief, muttered her thanks for his kindness, and rather louder assured him, that ‘Leslie Monterne would spurn any such offers.’

Conciliation was exhausted; but Vanderryck had the forbearing goodness to repeat his offered terms, and could go far enough out of himself, to advise his daughter to take time to think. That it was possible she could bestow a second thought on so

degrading a proposal, was a new breach in parental obedience ; and exasperated by despair, she most unadvisedly and unhandsomely in her taunting reply, caricatured her father's English grammar and pronunciation. He who had borne so much, could not bear this little. He dropped his English, and in very fluent French, and with vehemence and a tone that made her tremble, he insisted on the cessation of all intercourse with Leslie Monterne, and most strongly declared, with adjurations that only his preclusion from early discipline and his present excitement could excuse, that if ever she presumed to dispose of herself without his permission, one hundred pounds was all she should ever receive from him, and that should he detect any correspondence, he would ship her off for Holland to the care of a sister of his.

It was now no imputation on courage to think of at least temporizing ; therefore, with only the indulgence of writing to Leslie a description of the trials she had undergone, to which she enjoined him to make no reply, her next effort was made in a letter to her father, written with a new pen, in her best hand, on a sheet of the last-fancied paper, and, all together, in a style which she thought must affect him. She intended to have assailed his tenderness ; but with that, perhaps not uncommon variation from her purpose, which

makes the productions of a female-pen, any thing but what they were designed to be, she found, on reading over her letter, that it contained little more than a highly-coloured portrait of Mr. Leslie Monterne, in which that happy quotation, so intelligible to a Dutchman ! of ‘Hyperion’s forehead with the curls of Jove,’ stood most strikingly prominent. She saw, too late, the omission ; but she had subscribed her name : there was no place for a postscript ; and it was out of all hope, that she could write her letter again as well as she had written it in the first attempt—it therefore went to its destination with all its omissions :—her father was not vain enough to attempt a reply in kind. At the next breakfast-table, she heard the same words as those which had before dismayed her, and accompanied with a repeated prohibition of intercourse.

But all was not yet quite desperate ; Love and Youth are good campaigners, not easily beaten off the ground by the intimidations of a superior force, or the probable springing of a mine. The procrastination of treaty may serve against the former :—a circuitous track may keep clear of the latter ; and both these means, Miss Vanderryck had in her power.

The first movement was made, as soon in the autumn, as permission could be obtained to light a

fire in the parlour, where the young lady contrived to be found burning letters. On her father's entrance and sniffling with some alarm at the smell of the burnt papers, she gave him to understand that they were letters, consigned to the flames to make submission to his will more easy. He was in raptures ; and tears of grateful joy swam in his eyes, as he embraced his daughter and promised her every thing he could bestow, concluding with a careful recognition of his former decree, not personally against Leslie Monterne, towards whose imbecility he was inclined to be lenient, for the sake of the good-nature accompanying it, but against his idleness—a stigma, and a just cause for a parent's apprehension, which he might, at any time, have removed.

The artifice which Caroline was adopting, did not lie so deep as to escape suspicion ; and the honest simple Dutchman was entitled to pity, when, on communicating his delight and his freedom from all further anxiety, to his faithful friend and servant Shelly, he thanked God that his dear ‘ Garline had zeen the foolishness of marrying de idle man.’—In the overflowing of his joy, he made large additions, from his confidence and imagination, to the little which his daughter had conceded : he fancied that she had given him her solemn promise never to marry any man whom he could

disapprove—and this, out of fear lest she should make ‘her poor vader’s heart break.’—He could not quit the subject, till he had expatiated on the beauty of his ‘Garline,’ and compared her with her mother;—but he was heard with respectful sympathy; and he left his auditor asking himself, ‘Why does this man’s broken English make him more an object of pity than he would otherwise be?’—and answering, ‘Because in its resemblance to the imperfection of childhood, it seems to render the deceiving him a more atrocious attack on a defenceless person.’—The persuasion that some deception was practising, accompanied this brief investigation.

The next step taken by Caroline was not entirely on a false pretence. She did not quite feign illness; but she took advantage of that into which the fevered state of her mind, and her refusal to remove out of London, had brought her. It was the easiest thing possible to alarm her father on the subject of her health,—then to lead a physician into prescribing change of air—then to talk of writing to her god-mother, who was at Malvern—to report answers from her,—and then to make arrangements for joining her.

‘Vell, vell!’ said Vanderryck, when he pushed away his untasted coffee at breakfast, after listening to her fluent detail of her plans—‘healt is, do

be zure, de virst ding, my shild—go—Molly vill do all vor me—I shall av only Molly—I vant nobody elz—you may dake your jarret an your vine beeble wid you—bud I am zorry:—I do nod, indeet, zee much of you—egsept juld ven we ead; bud yed, do zee you zomedimes, an in your briddy dings, I do lose.—But, vell, vell!—perhaps your boor mudder ood a lived iv she ad gone to dat place—zo, go, go.’ He got up from the table, looked back on his daughter, and recollected, more forcibly than ever, that ‘she was pretty, like her angel-mother—and that her mother too had a cough.’

The time came when they were to part. Miss Vanderryck had informed Leslie of her proceedings, and had directed him how to cross on them.—He was to meet her at the place where she first stopped; and, as she had provided for travelling post, it was a thing very feasible to turn in a contrary direction: with great commendation from her father, she had advised his dismissing her men-servants and horses, the attendance of her maid being all she could want; and the proposal too well met his habitual regard to economy,—when she was not obviously interested in the suspension of it,—to alarm him.

It was now the hour of the last breakfast; and her father came as usual into the room, but the

coffee-pot had not made its appearance. ‘Garline,’ said he, ‘I av order my littel ead an drink down sdairs.—De less ve zay aboud going, de bedder—an iv I am do lose you zo, de less ve zee ov each oder, de less heart-break.—I zay noting, bud “Go, and Gott bless you”—you sall av de money—I muss learn nod do zee you, nod do look vor Garline.—I did ver vell last zommer—and zo I shall now; bud, I believe, I grow old and veak.—Diz is nod much indeed—Diz nod like your mudder—she never wend oud—bud still it is my shild.—Go, quick an quiet—I’ve no fait myself in airs or vizics—bud iv id vill do you goot—only go quick—you do nod know a fader’s heart, Garline, wen he av bud one doghder, and her mudder was an angel, and die yong, ven her shild is but jusb born.’

Vanderryck retreated, and Caroline took her breakfast alone.—While taking it, a gentle tap at the door of the room alarmed her:—convinced that, on opening the door, she should see Leslie, in all the excusable impatience of his situation; and yet herself under the decorous necessity of being very angry at the risque in which he involved her, she sprang from the table, and with features of as encouraging expression as any lover could wish to meet, she softly turned the ungain lock.

It was not Mr. Leslie Monterne, nor any one

who could be mistaken for him—it was the good-hearted faithful Shelly, who begged to speak a few words to her in private.

‘Pray, come in, Mr. Shelly—I did not know it was you, or you should not have waited—What do you wish to say?’

‘I wish,’ said Shelly, ‘to relieve my mind from a burden that oppresses it. Miss Vanderryck, you are going—who is there in this house, who can promise himself that he shall be here when you return?’

‘O dear! Mr. Shelly—why you know I am only going to Malvern for a few weeks—my cough is really so bad——’

‘Your cough is, I grant, bad—and I do not scruple to say, young lady, that it is a cough which ought to make you considerate.’

‘I shall get rid of it at Malvern—*here*, I am sure, I cannot—in this horrid place.’

‘I wish you *were* going to Malvern to get rid of it, madam—but give me leave to tell you, Miss Vanderryck, you are *not* going to Malvern—you are going to meet, and to throw yourself away upon that helpless idle being, Mr. Leslie Monterne; and, moreover, you are most culpably, most criminally, most unpardonably, deceiving,—and to your own ruin,—the tenderest father that ever child was blest with!’

‘ Mr. Shelly !’

‘ Miss Vanderryck !—You think me, I know, very insolent and presuming :—you will tell me I am a hireling and your father’s servant.—True ; but this was not my original situation—I have had education and have enjoyed affluence : I am a father myself ; and I feel grateful to my employer for his uniform kindness, and I may say for his friendship. Now, in this character of one so bound to him, let me, my dear young lady, endeavour to prevail on you to consider, before you risque breaking such a father’s heart, forfeiting his wealth and his blessing, and involving yourself in misery. You are not formed by nature, or inured by habit, to undergo hardships—what is not abundance, will, to you, be want ;—and should you ever find your mistake in this choice—should you ever perceive that a young man who will do nothing, is a poor companion and a bad protector, what can you do when your father’s door is shut against you ?’

He paused, expecting her reply ;— but had Caroline spoken, she must have admitted what she wished him to doubt, or have denied that of which she supposed him too well assured—she therefore remained silent.

‘ When I speak of a door shut against you,’ continued Shelly, ‘ I speak on my own conviction of what you will experience.—There is not in the

world a kinder-hearted man than your father, when the access to his heart is not barred by his habitual love for accumulation, or by resentment.—His value for money, you see, has, in all instances, given way to his tenderness for you. What nobleman's daughter, in this kingdom, has been indulged as you have?—How many fathers *could* do it?—how few *would* do it!—This may mislead you; and you may think that his anger may be as easily overcome as his parsimony. Do not believe it.—I know him well—he has said to you most solemnly, he tells me, that he will never forgive such an act of rebellious disobedience—he has said that £100 shall be your whole portion, if, while the man for whom you are about to make this sacrifice, retains his obstinate idleness, you are so imprudent—so—worse than imprudent—as to marry him.

‘I have now, at least,’ concluded Shelly, ‘discharged my conscience, and I hope, done my duty in warning you—I can say no more, than to beg you to take care of your cough—and, above all, not to risque every thing which you ought to hold dear, for a man so little creditable to your taste and good sense, as Mr. Leslie Monterne.’

Caroline paused—it was a matter of nicety to frame an answer that should say nothing—but even this she accomplished, by replying, with a

profound curtesy, that, 'whenever merchants'-clerks were made privy-counsellors, she would certainly submit her actions to their discussion.'

Mr. Shelly's portrait as he retreated, may be seen in that of the steward in Hogarth's 'Marriage-à-la-mode.' But Shelly, in his zeal, did more than perhaps Hogarth's steward dared do—he returned—and he warned the young lady that he could not in honour and honesty do less than inform Mr. Vanderryck of his firm persuasion of her intention.

Instead of being, or at least of *seeming* intimidated by this threat, she strongly advised him to the measure, and offered to wait for him where she was, 'if he would fetch papa,' or even to attend him to the 'compting-house, not for the sober purpose of convincing him that he did her injustice, but for the gratification of seeing him completely disgraced by a foiled attempt;—'and then,' said she, 'the only recompense I shall ask of papa, will be Mr. Shelly's instant dismissal.'

Shelly's confidence in his own sagacity was staggered.

'Will you say, my dear young lady,' said he, 'that, upon your honour, you are not going to meet Mr. Monterne?'

'I will say upon my honour,' she replied, laying her hand on her heart. Mr. Shelly did not

see the *équivoque*—he had no daughter yet disposed to outwit him—he did not know the latitude and longitude in Cupid's geography—he did not think as ill as he ought to have done, of human nature : —he had a large family, and he dared not risque his means of supporting them.—He therefore bowed and again retired.

In all the quietness enjoined her by her father, Caroline arrived at the moment when she was to quit his house, apparently for a short time—probably for a longer—but not, in her own judgment, for ever—or even should her father die, during the exile to which he might, for a time, as matter of form and good example, condemn her, she was certain that his will would set all straight, and that she should find herself in possession of all the goodly lumber of ‘that capital mansion in Devonshire-square,’ and all the still more goodly deposits in the public funds : she was therefore unmoved by all Mr. Shelly's arguments, and when told that her arrangements were completed and her carriage ready, she gave a look around the apartment she was quitting—a look rather of saucy farewell than of regret, and descended the stairs, comforting herself with her release from all *étiquette* under her father's mode of proceeding.

But Vanderryck's heart again played him false ;

and having set one of his clerks to watch her coming down, he could not deny himself the melancholy satisfaction of a last kiss.—He took it in silence, but then said, ‘ O vell, vell ! Gott bless you, my Garline—no need do wride much—only just say you are dare—I gannot, you know, wride ledders to you—go, go.’—He then turned in, among his clerks, and she heard Shelly say, ‘ Nay, nay, my dear Sir, pray, pray consider—it is for Miss Vanderryck’s health.’

No care had been omitted by Caroline to arrange Leslie’s movements so as to suit her own—he had her full instructions to meet her at Hounslow, and thither she ordered herself to be driven as quickly as possible.—She had not spared her father in her details ; all that he had said had been reported, and with an intention to caricature it ; but, like the wit of Sancho Pança, that had turned out respectable, which was expected to be contemptible ; and good sense had been uttered where nothing but blundering absurdity had been listened for. Under the influence of her own exertions therefore, Monterne was informed and disposed to act better than was intended ; and to gain an opportunity to do so, he, instead of proceeding to the place of assignation, came into the city, and as near to the house as he dared, and met her. He stopt the carriage, but then he was distressed, see-

ing her maid with her. A pretence to send her into a shop for something forgotten, removed this impediment, while he leant in at the chariot-window, and whispered that, 'somehow he did not like cheating Old Van Whittington in this way—he had a great mind to try what he could do with him.'

'What? and go into the 'compting-house, and wear a pen stuck behind your ear?'

'Why, aye—any thing rather than—than—than——'

Miss Vanderryck drew back; and on this moment hung the balance of her fate:—had her lover ended his sentence in the spirit in which he had the virtue to begin it, some excuse must have been devised for ordering the driver to turn about—but he replied by putting his hand into an inner pocket of his coat, and saying, 'I have just got my new flageolet—here it is—I would not trust the man to send it—so I went for it myself.'

Even in this unprepared modulation Caroline could follow. 'By the way,' said she, 'I have been thinking about my visiting-ticket—I think I would rather have "Leslie" in one character, and "Monterne" in another—it would be new—have you bespoke it at Hookham's?'

'Lord! no—I declare I forgot it.'

'Well then it is time enough when we come

back:—do you know?’ continued she, whispering still lower, ‘I was afraid they would have made me take four—they were quite scared at my baggage—but I told them it was very light:—my veil for church is but just come, though I ordered it so long ago—I wish I could show it you—I have got all my clothes; and I ordered the bills to be sent into the ‘compting-house—so I have got all my money entire—I would have had the four; but I thought we must go on with four; for I know, if you once begin, you must go on—and I thought you might not like it in so long a journey, as there is no danger of a pursuit.’

Leslie’s shake of his head was not contradiction: it was perfect agreement.

‘Can you not,’ said Caroline, ‘get into the carriage here?—nobody will see you, the clerks are all safe.’

He could not—he had to go to his tailor—and the lady was very near hearing for what—but he stopt in time; and it was agreed that, by favour of this casual *rencontre*, they might meet again at Hyde-park-corner, and proceed together.

The plan was to turn off from Hounslow to the north road, and to make the best of their way to Gretna-green, for which expedition they were prepared with a fund made up of 70*l.* which Miss Vanderryck’s leaving her father to pay her

bills, placed at her disposal—50*l.* which her father had given her for her expenses, and 65*l.* 4*s.* 3*d.* which remained to Mr. Leslie Monterne out of his last receipts.

As to futurity, ‘the worst come to the worst,’ he had a life-income of 200*l.* per annum, the bequest of a distant relation. What his wife should have, depended entirely on the good pleasure of her father.

To Hyde-park-corner the lady proceeded, preparing herself to wait an hour, which Leslie had claimed for his walk and his business by the way. She drew down the spring-curtains: the post-boy dismounted, and walked about, patting his horses, and improving the buckling of the harness.

Occupied as were Caroline’s thoughts, she let the hour go by, patiently. Her carriage was plain: it could not be known by its horses or liveries; therefore she was in no alarm: it was drawn to the side of the road, where there was ample space, therefore she was subject to no insults, and exposed to no danger—but, at length, she waked from her *reverie*, and began to think the time long, longer still, when the post-boy, tapping at the glass, declared that he could keep his horses waiting no longer, but must proceed or go back.

Disagreeable as was compulsion, there could

be no hesitation as to choice of action. The maid was sure that Mr. Leslie would overtake them ; and under this responsibility, her mistress decided for Hounslow. They were not indeed overtaken ; but there was an excellent inn to wait in ; and there they *must* wait. Abundance of day was before them ; and nothing was wanting but patience.

The maid retired to eat—the mistress could not think of food ; but when the light was fast departing, and no gentleman arrived, faintness did the work of hunger, and what could be most expeditiously drest, was ordered, under the confidence that it would be left untouched on Monterne's arrival.

The repast was prepared—and it was eaten undisturbed. The carriage still was standing out in the road ; and the master of the house came to advise the housing it. The maid prudently inquired how far the trunks on the outside would be safe : the inn-keeper, too wary to admit the existence of that which he had not seen, and for which he must be responsible, only replied, ' Trunks, trunks ? I will go and see, ma'am, and let you know in an instant.'

There were no trunks—but the carriage had come with much less fatigue to the horses, for its having been lightened at Hyde-park-corner.

What was to be done? The best advice would have been to write a note for Mr. Leslie Monterne, stating circumstances—then taking fresh horses back to Devonshire-square, there confessing the perpetrated folly and intended iniquity, and, in conclusion, taking advantage of Leslie Monterne's good disposition rather to earn than to steal a worthy man's daughter.

But there was nobody to give this advice; nor was there any one to follow it, had it been given. Distressing as was the loss, more distressing would any measure of prudence have been:—all was not gone—the best habiliments—the veil—and all that was prepared for 'the church,' were within the carriage—the money was safe—the maid's loss might be made good—and to persevere was easier than to retract.

Before ten at night, but when the lady had already begun to think of rest, under the warning voice of her cough, came in Mr. Leslie Monterne perfectly cool, and almost claiming pity for his fatigues and vexations. In his hasty arrangement and undertaking, he had forgotten, not that he must call at his tailor's, but that he must take up his baggage at his lodgings, before he could proceed to Hyde-park-corner. As he lived in a polite part of the town, the distance was, when talked of, nothing—when to be cleared, rather more to be

considered : he had however determined on the necessary exertion : he had only just to see that his things were right, and to send for a hackney-coach, instead of the chaise in which he meant to have conveyed himself and property to Hounslow—it could not make half an hour's difference ; and he knew Caroline would wait.

Arrived at his lodgings, his laundress had not been punctual, but she lived in the mews just by ; and the same person who forbade the chaise and called the hackney-coach, could fetch what she had to send—in the mean time, he could run himself to the shoe-maker, who had not attended to his orders, and then he had only to set off.—All this was accomplished, in due time—that is to say within three hours ; and he set off for Hyde-park-corner. Not sensible how late it then was, he lost some time in supposing some such hinderances as his own, might have stopped Caroline—his good-nature made great allowances—she might have recollected by the way, things omitted.

‘ Hope ’ confessing at length, that she had ‘ told a flattering tale,’ he bethought himself of inquiring of the turnpike-men if they had seen a carriage such as he described, waiting, and then driving off. ‘ Yes,’ said one, ‘ and I fancy lighter than it came ; for I’m much mistaken if it hadn’t some trunks handed off—I couldn’t be positive

—but I saw something that looked very much like it.’—Monterne, not very much roused by this extraneous circumstance, could only resolve on getting to Hounslow with all expedition: the hackney-coach that had brought him was the readiest conveyance; but the horses were tired, and the man insisted on his dismissal. The baggage was lodged in the turnpike-house—and after screaming himself hoarse to every coachman whose vehicle promised any accommodation, he had the good luck to be admitted on the outside of a mail and deposited safely at the inn at Hounslow. Perhaps the hint of Caroline’s loss, might save his baggage; or else he might have seen it—or not seen it—driven off in the hackney-coach.

Neither in health or spirits was Miss Vander-ryck a gainer when she rose next morning from her disturbed sleep—but hurry does much for those whose recollections are not agreeable; and having allowed her maid to make a few purchases, and broken into her bank for the purpose, the travellers were ready to set off in good earnest.—The charges of the house alarmed Leslie; and added to the frequent change of horses, and consequently frequent demands on his pocket, perhaps they assisted in exciting a doubt whether it were prudent to go on. At the first opportunity of speaking to Caroline unheard by her attendant,

he again, while carelessly writing on a pane of glass with his pencil, suggested the expedient of trying 'Van Whittington in the soft place;' but she was still firm.

On getting out of the carriage at the stage where they were to stop for the night,—for all fear of pursuit or suspicion was done away by the Malvern story—when it was now so dark that they drove into the inn-yard by lamp-light, Monterne encountered an acquaintance. After a little conversation, and while Miss Vanderryck was making the usual inquiry about accommodation, the purpose of this journey was guessed; and Monterne made no scruple of confessing that he wished the way shorter. His friend suggested the alternative of stopping where he was, and by a quiet residence, obtaining the necessary right to the good offices of the church. He knew enough of the present state of the parish to foresee that a stranger, called to the care of the clerical duty, might, when taken by surprise, inadvertently do that at which another person in cool recollection might start, and perform the ceremony, seeing the way had been already prepared for it; and this it was which brought Leslie Monterne and Maximilian Broderaye acquainted.

No plan of subsequent proceeding having been arranged, the wedded pair had all the 'world be-

fore them where to choose.'—But, as it was a matter of vital importance to make application to Mr. Vanderryck, they inclined to the neighbourhood of London, and accordingly possessed themselves of a very neat lodging, at a baker's, by the road-side, in the steepest part of the romantic hill of Hampstead, giving the earliest possible proof of an attention to economy, by bargaining for it at a low price, on account of the best bed-chamber being over the oven.

From this place, they assailed their 'Van Whittington' with letters, all of the bride's composition—no reply came.—Monterne then tried Shelly; but as Caroline controlled his expressions, he dared not make the only concession from which he could hope any benefit. And now, even *that* would have been too late:—Shelly, by the order of his principal, inclosed a draft on his banker, payable only to 'bearer,'—for one hundred pounds, and added a few softening lines of regret at the painful office assigned him, and a few more, descriptive of Mr. Vanderryck's distress while in doubt of his daughter's safety.—'I suppose,' said Leslie, 'he expected a stamped receipt from your god-mamma.'—'I might, indeed, have contrived better,' Caroline replied:—'I never thought about it, or I could have sent him a letter, as if by a private hand. I have known this done—but I had so much to do!'

Hope and confidence still held out, that, by the time this sum was spent, a fresh supply would come; and to spend freely was considered as necessary to give a fit idea of the *ratio* of their necessities. The winter came on—the exhalation of the oven was intolerable.—Hampstead was, in itself, too cold—a southern sea-bathing-place was advised, and Brighthelmstone was preferred before all others, for many wise reasons, on which it should have been avoided.

To replace the bride's lost wardrobe—to satisfy the greediness of her maid—to travel and move, were all sufficiently expensive; and the money, like snow in the sunshine, was obviously diminished whenever looked at. Different medical men judged differently of Mrs. Monterne's ailments—when considered as pulmonary and consumptive, ass's milk and other comparatively costly substitutes for nutriment, were prescribed—when decided to be connected with simple debility, the kitchen-fire was covered with extracts from meat, and varieties of savoury concoctions, which, together with fees and drugs, assisted in giving a very generous *ratio* for Mr. Vanderryck's guidance, whenever he should ask to be allowed to offer his money.

Deriving no benefit from Brighthelmstone, the invalid was ordered to Bath, and the ability to go

thither was purchased with a very fine pearl-necklace which her father had not only bought, but taken great pains to procure for her.—Her *accouchement* cost a diamond-cross, which her god-mother had given her—but these were only temporary sacrifices. Parents at fifty years of age are of antediluvian longevity in the eyes of impatient children; and ‘it was impossible that “Van Whittington” could hold out much longer.’

But Van *did* hold out in existence; and, worse than all! in resolution; and the young couple found they must consider themselves as sure of nothing beyond Leslie’s life-income. Shifting, therefore, from one place fancied cheap, to another fancied cheaper; and, of course, spending in moving as much as they saved in rent, they had, at last, with the sacrifice of every superfluity, cleared themselves of debts; and uniting the two discordant considerations of health and frugality, they at last reached St. Emeril, and had the means of supporting their spirits by looking at that which they flattered themselves might one day be their own, and which, in fact, with the intervention of only one life, was, by the baroness’s marriage, brought nearer than merely into the possibility of reversion to them.

CHAPTER XIX.

TO return to the deserted village of St. Emeril, and its vicar.—Mr. Broderaye carried to his lady all the expressions of polite impatience for their meeting, with which Mrs. Monterne had freighted his memory ; and the time of day admitting of it, his Angelica dressed herself and set out, in high excitement, to make good his undertaking for her. She returned, charmed with every thing.—Mr. Monterne was ‘a charming man ;’—Mrs. Monterne was ‘a charming sweet young woman ;’—the little Carilis was ‘a most charming dear love ;’ and Mrs. Broderaye herself seemed determined to be charming.—Having full powers from her husband to be as civil as she pleased, in a case in which he perceived that too much could hardly be done, she had met Mrs. Monterne’s impatience, in the worst way possible, by inviting her for the evening :—and as, according to the old proverb, ‘wherever there is a will there is a way ;’ and according to something not quite so well proved, indisposition is never to be an obstacle where pleasure invites, Mrs. Monterne, recollecting the usual dullness of her evenings, very readily promised herself :—

‘her cough was so nearly cured by this fine Devonshire soft air!’—‘she was in such spirits, in the prospect of such an agreeable friendship!’—‘Carilis could so well be put to bed a little sooner, and would be so perfectly safe—the mistress of the house would so kindly go in and look at her!’ that there could be no reason for declining this pleasure.—‘Well! do as you like,’ said Leslie—‘in my opinion, it is running a great risque—but do as you like.’

Caroline had a good opportunity in her reply, of, to use her own expression, *quizzing* her husband for his superfluous care of her, and thus showing how high she stood in his appreciation.

The desired meeting between these friends-elect took place, and was, to the ladies delightful:—to the vicar it was a sacrifice of time which, though he felt it, and knew he must fetch it up, he made very willingly in the hope of doing useful kindness. But the weather was not as benign as the party: a heavy rain came on—not unexpectedly, for it had threatened in good time,—but very untowardly for the safe return home of Mrs. Monterne, who now began to think of her cough, in a very different way from that in which she had considered it while pleasure was in prospect, or rather, while the end she had now in view, was more distant. She shrunk from en-

countering the rain : nay, with that effrontery of selfishness and weakness, which braves the reproof it deserves, under the confidence that others are too good to utter an exposing truth, she now found fault with the climate, in terms which contradicted all she had before said in its praise. Her husband, well inured as he was, had begun to say, ‘ Nay, but, Caroline——’ She stopt him with a tart answer, showing that she knew perfectly well what he might, and, indeed, ought to have said, and concluded with something little less than blame of him for letting her risque the danger.

The rain and the moaning proceeded—it was time to be gone ; but it was impossible to set out. Mrs. Monterne’s cough came on, as her husband observed to her, it always did at that time in an evening, — shiverings followed — then a violent flushing, and what Leslie called ‘ her diamond-eyes.’

The vicar’s mind was made up as to the necessity of the case : the guests must be housed till the morning.

Pleased as he had been with the alacrity of his wife, he was checked in the opinion he was conceiving of her improved spirit, when he saw a blank repugnance to this act of necessary hospitality. She would not have stirred a foot or a finger ;— she saw the imprudence into which he was plung-

ing ; and he saw as clearly as she could, the risque he was incurring :—but Mrs. Broderaye did not recollect that it was her own want of foresight and discretion in tempting ‘ that charming Mrs. Monterne ’ to expose herself to the evening-air, from which the present circumstances originated. The vicar *did* see this ; and he had previously expressed his apprehensions, both of Mrs. Monterne’s suffering and of the weather—but at *that* time, and when a message might have prevented all that had ensued, Mrs. Broderaye was confident that there would be neither mischief nor rain.

Mr. Broderaye had become acquainted with the *real* character of his Angelica, soon enough after their marriage, to prevent any very material damage to himself from her bad management : it had soon reduced her to a cypher in her own family : she had not improved ; and when the probability of her doing so was given up, his household resolved itself nearly into that of a bachelor who had the care of an imbecile female-relation. Had he, in the present instance, relied on his Angelica, Mrs. Monterne might have had a bed with damp sheets, or been put into a chamber, the hangings of which were in the laundry ; but, as he had provided himself with a stout Suffolk housekeeper, who knew what was to be done and took care to see it performed, there was no danger.

The hospitable offer was, immediately as it was made, accepted. Leslie was sent to the inn to fetch what was necessary for sleeping, and, as Caroline said, 'just to inquire whether the child was asleep;' and the party was arranged for the night.

The next morning, Mrs. Monterne was too ill to leave her room, and the child was, on the motion of Mrs. Broderaye, fetched. Monterne himself was a drag on the vicar for the whole day; and no move could be made till Caroline recovered from this fresh cold.—But she did *not* recover: she lived one fortnight—every day worse—and at the end of that time died, querulously whimpering out, with the weakness of repentance, and none of its efficacy, a re-iterated wish that she could see her father, and, in the comatose state of her last moments, betraying more of her own misconduct, than the vicar would otherwise have heard.

It was an awful event. Here was a young woman in the bloom of youth, first deprived of health by her own neglect of the means of preserving it, then involved in a systematic filial disobedience, concluded by an act of the grossest folly, reduced from overflowing wealth to comparative poverty, with no settled home, and, at last, the intruded inmate in the house of a stranger, dying, with only enough of thought to recollect her deep

offence! Her conversation, always frivolous, proved her attachment to the world increasing as the probability of her remaining in it diminished:—she clung to it, as a shipwrecked sailor to the mast, in the consciousness that there was nothing which she could substitute for it. She talked of dress and dresses, of stores of clothes which she meant to provide, and even laid plans for inhabiting St. Emeril's Court. Of her child she took little notice—she behaved to *that* as she should have done to the world—she knew she must quit it, and therefore disregarded it.

It was Mr. Broderaye's sad office to consign to the earth this elegantly-spoiled female; and her husband's inane good-nature was gratified in recollecting the consolation she had expressed a few moments before she expired, in knowing that she should be laid in the church belonging to the inheritance which she had thought on till it seemed to approach nearer to possession. Mr. Broderaye dared not to open the vault of the Beltravers family for her, but he placed her in the chancel near his father; and, this duty performed with feeling that disdained the question 'What's he to Hecuba?' he next turned his attention to the widow and the motherless Carilis, who still remained his guests.

Monterne gave little trouble to him in seeking

arguments of comfort. His loss made small impression on his mind : he had his flageolet ;—and though he checked himself when he had got into the second line of a favourite song—he made experiments on his proficiency, and attempted new points of execution that redeemed his time from loss—and admitted of his saying to Mr. Broderaye, as if claiming praise, that ‘ if he was not playing, still he was improving.’

Calling to mind the extreme sorrow of Mrs. Broderaye on the loss of her mother, the vicar might have been apprehensive of her suffering severely under this shock ;—but as he had not forgotten the sudden turn which her daughterly grief had taken on finding herself out-manceuvred by her mamma, he could not be certain of any consistent effects in the present instance. There are persons and situations sometimes, which after first calling forth much tender apprehension, and next an equal portion of doubt, leave the minds of those disposed to feel for them, in a state that amounts to neutrality ; and that this was the proper state for all those who took an interest in Mrs. Broderaye, a very transient observation proved ; for, when the vicar began to fear for her, he found that some coolness had already abated the fervour of friendship between the ladies—Mrs. Monterne having betrayed that she thought the vicar’s lady,

‘ a very common-place personage ’—and Mrs. Broderaye having found out, that her dear Caroline was ‘ very stand-off-ish.’

Poor vacant Monterne could not, in common pity, be sent back to his inn—nor could the child, who had no servant, be turned over to the provision which such a father could make for it.—There was indeed no discussion on the subject—the young man made no movement to go; and the infant could make none. Mrs. Broderaye, by good fortune, was pleased with the child, and unwilling to part from it; and as the terms on which Monterne had domesticated himself with the vicar, did not require the total sacrifice of time and attention, the good done made the evil less felt, and winter was suffered to approach, without any hint given of the necessary termination of that which in its nature must be temporary.

The young man had it not in his power to repay the benefits he received :—if he made an attempt to do any thing useful, it was spoiled in the outset, or left in the middle.—If he offered his legs to go any little distance, he was tired at the half-way, and came back to send some one else in his stead. His mind, too inert to be in an active posture, like the foot that does not clear the ground, was always stumbling and blundering: if he directed two letters at once, they were sure to

have the wrong name or the wrong place affixed to them—if he meant to be civil, he was certain of being rude—if he asked a question, it came in the form of inquisitiveness—if he made a personal remark, it was, without intention, affronting; and if he tried to help, hinderance ensued—yet he wrote pretty poetry, and played whist to admiration and to the discomfiture of all the calculations on necessary results.

Uninteresting as he was, and open to reproof as he was, yet no one—at least with Mr. Broderaye's mind—could see with indifference, his original and increasing dislike to the climate of the west of England, justified by symptoms of its hostility to his already-relaxed frame. It did not show itself in any thing resembling the disease that had been so fatal to his wife; but it threatened as direfully, and made it necessary for him, with all speed, to find a more invigorating atmosphere: he would not go—not out of fondness to his child—not out of attachment to the friend who had sheltered him—not out of any one active principle, but merely held by that passive obstinacy which kept him where he cared not for being, and hindered his going where he had the only imperious motive that he could have, for hastening. When death stared him in the face, he set out, commissioning Mr. Broderaye to put the child to a

nurse, and naming for settling accounts, those ‘Greek kalends,’ which never come. When he should have made the best of his way to a dry temperate climate, in preparation for one still more bracing, he would follow the lead of his humour, and, because some one whom he knew, was going to Lisbon, he would go thither. The consequence was what might have been predicted : his corpse arrived in the Tagus ; and the vicar learnt from the news-papers, that Miss Caroline Leslie Monterne was an orphan, and from his own calculation, that her maintenance devolved on him.—For the present time, the burden was small—for the future, he was too wise to be anxious on his own account—on that of the child, anxiety was excusable ; but he called to mind and to his comfort, that exquisite correction of sentimental hyperbole, which he had heard uttered by lips, now regarded by him as in the grave !—when She—the only She then to him !—had said, in speaking of patient endurance, ‘ I do not think “ Heaven tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,” but I *do* think it thickens the fleece when the storm beats hard upon it.’

Fortunately it was his Angelica’s humour to be still pleased with the child.—Now that she had no competitors, she played at being ‘ a mamma ’ very prettily.—At first she washed, and combed,

and dressed it very duly, and spent all her silver in ribbons and gay shoes for it—but once checked in this nimble outgoing, she had no longer pleasure in her performances—she meant to have played with a doll—not to bring up a rational infant. Of necessity therefore, and much to her advantage, the little Carilis was turned over to a servant ; and as Mrs. Broderaye had seen enough of a nursery now, to thank God that she was *not* a mother, some cause of discontent being removed, it must be supposed that a proportionate gain was made in the opposite virtue:—but this does not follow—what metaphysician could calculate on any the next freak of such a mind?—the delight of such a disposition is to find a succession of evil, or to make it where it is not found.—Seeing the vicar attaching himself to the lovely little creature, and bestowing time in teaching it the alphabet, she framed a standing for the narrow foot of Envy, and then mounted Jealousy upon her shoulders.

There is an accelerating tendency in *evil*, in its very nature, which cannot, but by very powerful machinery, be impressed on *good*: no calculation can be made on its *ratio* of progression—no experience can tell where it will stop. It would have surprised any one, who had observed Mrs. Broderaye's exuberance of affected fondness for Carilis, when she was playing at being mamma, to have

witnessed the causeless change of feeling on her growing weary of the charge. The child, who had been at first smothered with kisses, and treated with honeyed words, was, in this short lapse of time, become an object of dislike, was pushed aside, and was made unhappy, even thus early in its little life, by the cruel mortification of bringing to her mind the imperfection of her speech in naming herself. To tease her, the vicar's lady called her scarcely any thing but Miss Careless Monkey; and Carilis never forgot it. It would have been cause of still greater grief, considering the child's forlorn condition, to perceive how soon after it became an orphan, it was reduced, in her estimation, first to a trouble, and then to a nuisance. But when the vicar's domestic quiet became involved in the subject—when the hitherto-*stupid* silliness of his wife, under the provocation of seeing any thing beloved found a voice, and his meals were disturbed and his study was almost invaded with taunt of him and scolding of the child, he began to think of the expediency of following the father's direction, and putting it out to nurse. This was, indeed, meeting the wishes of Mrs. Broderaye only half-way. The circumstances of the marriage to which Carilis owed her birth, were well known from the report of Monterne; and hints were not spared now of the propriety of

sending the child, without any allowance of option, to be taken care of by its grand-father. But its protector was not, as yet, obliged to understand these hints ; and the progress of *his* feelings towards the infant, had been so diametrically opposite to that of his wife's, that to part from it, on any terms, was painful ; but on such as these, not to be thought on.

The prospect of this disagreeable necessity of dismissing his play-thing from his care, was not suffered to fade upon his imagination. Every day and every hour brought it more closely upon his perception ; but, though it was, on principle, his practice to turn about and face pursuing evil, there was something in this, so nearly of kin to parental feeling, that he shrunk from any determination that required such a courageous self-denial.—It was, alas ! only postponing pain to feel it more keenly himself, and to make it felt by the child. Mrs. Broderaye's mixt sensations settled themselves into that comprehensive compound called 'spite ;' and it was soon evident that, not merely for his own peace, but to prevent infliction on Carilis, she *must* be removed.

This once made matter of conviction, there could be no hesitation, whatever the reluctance ; and when all fear of injury by such a change of residence at an unfavourable time of year,

was over, Mr. Broderaye turned his attention to the disposal of the child. Not possessing any portion of self-conceit in a case so new to him, he did not know that his feelings in it, were meritorious and honourable : he was ashamed of them, even in his own presence ; and whenever, after a game of play with the pretty little girl, or after her giving him one of many proofs of her unvarying love for him, he found himself feeling for his handkerchief, he sunk in his own judgment as much as—without his supposing it possible—he would have risen in that of any one who had been in his confidence.

He had no partaker in his regret or his anxiety—both were sedulously concealed from her who ought, not merely to have shared, but prevented them. He would have found sympathy in the servant to whom the care and trouble of the child had been transferred ; but he could not have sought it without betraying himself, and seeming to overlook his wife : he therefore rested on the support that had never yet failed him, the integrity of his own conscience, and the confident hope that, in implicit obedience to a sense of duty, he should, at last, find that he had done right.

Mrs. Broderaye's habits of mind and of life, did not make her sagacious in discovering the uneasiness of those for whom she might have been con-

cerned. She cared little who looked well or ill. She was acquainted in all the little families of the village, and her time was spent in its tattle. When she talked of the acquisition of Carilis as ‘a darling, a delight, a pet,’ her expressions were echoed back to her, with encomiums on her goodness, which in themselves had a tendency, perhaps, to make her suspect, when the fever of fondness was abating, that she had been *too* good—*so* good, as to make people wonder and stare.—When she began to complain of the burden of a child thus forced on her care, she as readily found sympathy under the misfortune as she had done encouragement in her virtue;—and when she was setting her wits to get rid of the poor orphan, there were not wanting some who with, ‘to be sure,’ and ‘certainly,’ and ‘undoubtedly,’ and ‘very true, indeed’—could throw out the prudence of preventing the surmises of those who knew nothing of the manner in which Carilis had been introduced into the vicarage-house. Thus fortified with arguments, not one of which was honest, and with feelings, not one of which deserved a moment’s harbouring, she was invulnerable by all the manifestations of uneasiness in her husband’s countenance and manner; and something not very far removed from fear of her, kept him silent in the formation of his design.

CHAPTER XX.

THE morning came when the plan was to be put in train, and it requiring the vicar to go a little way from home, he wished to spare himself, by avoiding the sight of Carilis before he set out. She was now more than three years old, and not deficient in sagacity; but against this, he had guarded by some precautions, and was quitting the gate, as he hoped unperceived by her, when he heard himself called from her nursery-window. She was sensible to her not having seen him, as usual, that morning; and though in general far from intemperate in her demands, was not to be pacified without more notice than the distance admitted. He was obliged—or he thought himself obliged—to go back—and never had she appeared to him so engaging, or the difficulty of getting away from her, so great.—Mrs. Broderaye, in tormenting her, had used the threat of her being ‘sent out to nurse,’ without producing the desired effect: she therefore had translated it down into that of being ‘sent away’—but, in her despicable egotism, enlarging the punishment into being ‘sent away from *her*,’ the child’s feelings

proved still obtuse.—Self was at length obliged to yield ; and she altered the denunciation into being ‘ sent away from Mr. Broderaye !’—there was now no want of feeling—this was perfectly comprehended ; and thus impressed, and thinking only on separation, without adverting to the method of it, Mr. Broderaye’s clandestine going-out alarmed her fears and made them clamorous.

Having undergone all the painful pleasure of her kisses, and gently detached himself from the entwining of her arms, he proceeded on his way to the abode of a very decent cottager, who lived about a mile from the church, and towards whom his choice was attracted by the knowledge of her having done a deed somewhat similar to that which he felt himself called on to do, but in his judgment of infinitely greater merit, as her means were very scanty. He had found her, when he first entered on the clerical duty of the parish, burdened voluntarily in the acceptance, though compulsively in the imposition, with the charge of a very fine little boy, then a child in arms, who had been saved from a wrecked vessel, in which his mother and a servant belonging to her had been lost with most of the crew, in a stormy winter’s night.

A sailor had brought the child safe to shore at dawn of day, at the hazard of his own life, and the woman having in passing by, joined the

crowd, to whom he was telling his story, had in the warmth of her good feelings, relieved him from the anxiety of the moment, by offering to take the child home, and give it food and dry its clothes, which, as the misfortune had occurred while the passengers were retired to rest, consisted only of the fewest and most simple articles of dress. And not even from these, was the smallest information to be gained: they were coarse in their texture, very ordinarily put together, and had been repaired with a perseverance that indicated poverty in an extreme.

The sailor could say nothing, but that his ship had been stationed for some time off Bourdeaux, as he supposed to favour the escape of persons who wished to leave France, then in the height of civil commotion: he had seen the child with its nurse, but never the mother; the nurse he could tell was a woman of Bourdeaux, and the mother he concluded to be also French. The captain and those who remained of the crew, were, now that the storm had subsided, putting off in a boat: the man went with them, and they were seen, steering for another part of the coast.

The child, fed, and comforted by warmth and dry clothing, was soon in the happiest oblivion of all its sorrows; but on waking, its distress on

seeing a stranger instead of its nurse, was great. Gentle means soon soothed this ; and now that all first feelings were over, the woman was disposed to listen to the assurances of her neighbours, that the parish must take care of the foundling ; but in a very short time becoming fond of her charge, she postponed presenting it to the parish-officers, till a vestry was held, amongst the members of which, she hoped to find some one who would take more than a parish-interest in the child.

She did what she had projected : the child was well received by a general sentiment of compassion ; but no individual stepped forward. When about to quit it, it showed reluctance : her heart failed her ; and crying out, ‘ ’Tis a little Moses in the bulrushes—I am no Pharaoh’s daughter, gentlemen ; but I *can* be its nurse,’ she snatched it away, muttering to herself—‘ He shall be no parish-child while I can work for him—If I cannot find him a *father*, I will be a *mother* to him.—If I can but get a couple of shillings more a week, I can do—and this I’ll rather work for, than ask for.’

A widow herself—the mother of many children, and now left in comparative solitude by the death of some and the distant settlement of others of them, every feeling increased her wish to retain the charge of the little boy, and any

doubt of her power was mortifying.—Every hour persuading herself more and more, that the child was not of poor parents, she felt a sort of indignant pride that hindered her applying for contribution towards its maintenance, and, in this charitable dependence on her unvarying kindness, Mr. Broderaye found it with her, when he first saw her. It appeared to him, her grand-son ; but, on inquiry, hearing its legend, and the manner in which she had become possessed of it, he felt an interest in the circumstance, and encouraged the woman in her charitable exertions. The boy had then no name but that of ‘the child.’ Of what country or communion his parents were, or what name he had ever borne, no information could be obtained or sought : it was unfit, if he were to remain in England, that any thing necessary to his relation to the country that protected him, should be omitted. Mr. Broderaye, therefore, consulting with his nearest neighbour of moral worth and personal property, determined on baptizing him, and providing for his turning out to belong to a better class of life, than that in which he was, by misfortune, placed, they themselves and the lady of the consulted friend, stood sponsors for him. To determine on a name was a matter of boundless license, and his nurse certainly had a hankering after that of Moses ; but the

suggestion that he might be thought a Jew, made her give up. Appearing French by birth, and the woman having corrected Mr. Broderaye when he supposed him her *grand-son*, by saying, he was rather her *new-son*, he proposed giving him the names of Frank and Newson; and by these he was baptized and known.

Many shillings and half-crowns, and more than either, had gone out of the vicar's pocket, towards the support of this fine little fellow, who had crept very much into his affections. Every external indication about the boy, spoke in favour of a generous descent—he was thoroughly boyish—no one on earth would ever have taken him for a girl: stout, broad-shouldered, with a great expansion of chest, and extremely strong in limbs, he was a subject for a sculptor, while his warm tint of complexion, his healthy colour, and hazel eyes, and a profusion of curling hair, two shades darker than his eyes, would have courted the pencil of a colourist.

Very soon he discovered that he was not devoid of character: his temper, fiery and impetuous, was, at all times, under the government of his affections; and now deeply impressed with a sense of what he owed to his kind protectress, the ardour of his feelings was always in her favour. Obligated, for want of other play-fellows, to mix

with the children of the cottagers, he in all sports and pastimes where superiority was to be bestowed, claimed it for himself; and instead of appearing awed by persons of a higher class, he manifested a natural disposition to associate himself with them, making no exception but for his nurse, from whom he showed no wish to detach himself. If she was oppressed by labour, she was sure of Frank's endeavour to assist her: if she was ill, he was solicitous for her cure; and if she was in want of that which was not to be procured, the sense of inability was distressing to him. Having found out, when not more than three years and a half old, that his nurse had been alone and ill one afternoon, when Mr. Broderaye had taken him out, he listened to her detail of suffering and solitude, and then, his mind rapidly passing forward to a promise of future pleasure, in an evening's invitation from the wife of his other god-father, he said, without any leading towards the subject—'I non't go to Mrs. Norris's on Saturday.'—The woman had sagacity enough to see the context, and the good sense to set a due value on the forbearance which was to be practised. She saw in these words, not merely an offer, but a decided intention, of relinquishing a great indulgence, to save her from a supposed evil: she reported it with exultation in private to the vicar, and took his ad-

vice to let Frank forego his pleasure for once, that he might learn to value the approbation of his conscience as his best reward, and be kept safe from the danger of feeling encouraged, in a second instance, to make a civil offer, in the hope that, as in the former, he might be let off.

But the good old soul who had taken this charge on herself was often disheartened in her hope of Frank Newson's *virtues*. The vicar had the most perfect influence over him; and nothing but Nurse ever came in competition with his fondness for Mr. Broderaye. When called by him to read, or give any proof of attainment, he was faultless; but under the discipline of the old woman, his vagrant attention was always on the wing, when it ought to have been stationary.—With her, the lesson went on 'd-o-g, dog—h-o-r-s-e, horse.—Have you got any barley-sugar? c-a-t, cat.—Have you got any plums?'—and when in progress, sentences were attempted, those of the most serious and profitable kind were interlaced with—'Where is Harry Hawes?—Will you go out to-day?—Where were you born?' Still more was the good creature alarmed, when, in hearing him the catechism, he framed a new response by saying, instead of what he should have professed in his creed, 'I believe in all articles of de dibble's faith.'—Mr. Broderaye eased her mind

under this terrible apprehension of the dear child's turning out, as she said, 'a Heathen Greek;' and Frank soon knew better, under his information.

With this woman, whose name was Martha Pearce, it was the vicar's wish and intention to place the little Carilis, glad to have an opportunity of showing his confidence in her care, his esteem for her laudable conduct, and his disposition to requite it, as far as was in his power, by a little emolument. He had not, indeed, overlooked the objection subsisting in the sex of her older charge; but Mr. Broderaye did not hastily take up ready-made opinions, on vulgar suppositions of inevitable consequences. At any rate, for some years, there was no danger of Cupid's whetting his arrows on the parish-grindstone, or of Hymen's clandestinely lighting his torch at the baker's oven—and for any long-way-off approximations, he was as little certain of doing well as ill by interference. 'After all,' said he to himself as he walked on, 'I can only do what appears to me best at the time—I may be wrong; and this infant may have cause to wish I had done otherwise; but my motives she never shall have reason to blame.—If I can draw three feet of a line that is to reach thirty, in a right direction, I have a better prospect of attaining the point aimed at, than if I set out, with a vagrant course, under the notion of avoiding obstacles.'

Martha Pearce gratefully and joyfully accepted the trust and the stipend. Carilis and Frank were to go together to the separate establishments, under the same roof, of a hamlet-school, kept by a decent man and his wife. In a way that perhaps had its influence on his future character, the vicar explained to Frank the duty incumbent on those of his sex towards those of the weaker; and the boy's complexion mantled still higher, when he was, with all due formality, constituted the guide and protector of something less able to guide and protect itself than he was.

To lead Carilis out of his house was repugnant to Mr. Broderaye's feelings; and to suffer any artifice or deception to be used, was as inconsistent with his principles. His Angelica had been made acquainted with the plan for the child's removal; and he secretly intended to avail himself of what he thought her *neutrality*, if not, in fact, something still better suited to the exigency of the painful moment, in dismissing his darling from his roof.—Martha Pearce had been, for some days, in the preparatory habit of coming to the house and practising her best attractions on the little girl, who showed no personal aversion; and it was thought that she had gained sufficiently on her affection, to make her very willingly quit Mrs. Broderaye for Martha Pearce. But *la belle*

petite Angelique's freakiness had taken now another turn; and instead of assisting, she was one of those who were to be manœuvred in getting Carilis out of the house. She had the effrontery to pretend sorrow in parting from that which she had been trying to undermine, and now, only for the sake of annoyance, she was converted from a fancied help into a proclaimed hinderance, and was beginning to bribe the child into parting from her with regret. 'This is almost intolerable,' said the vicar to himself—'the inconvenience to *me* is nothing compared to the abstract duplicity—I could resent and punish this, but I shall do no good.—Well might Thomas a-Kempis say, that one of our greatest trials is to live with the *perverse*—with any other description of persons, we have some chance of occasional agreement; but perverseness is uniform opposition; and this, in its very nature, precludes peace.—Never mind!—any thing is better than being lulled to sleep upon our post—of this, certainly, I am in no danger.—But now, how shall I get the child from me?—How? why stand it, and do it myself.'

Husband and wife buckled on their armour for the occasion, as the time drew near; but having but one suit between them, it was of necessity shared—the lady had the first choice: she took the sword and dagger, thinking perhaps, poor

soul ! that she was only defending herself when she was really attacking others—her husband contented himself with the shield and helmet ; and thus prepared, the one with sincere feeling and the other with hypocritical, they attended the transfer of Miss Monterne.

The vicar had tacitly suffered his wife to be present, in the very excusable hope, that in her new mood, she would, at least, relieve him from the positive necessity of putting Carilis into the arms of Martha Pearce ; but he had something yet to learn as to the vagaries of both ladies.—Mrs. Broderaye was enacting mamma in a great chair, and Carilis contrived, by her evolutions, to range her and Martha Pearce on one side, as if allies, and the vicar and the servant who had hitherto been her nurse, on the other, placing herself, not in the midst to be fought for, but in perfect contact with her own party, from whom she was by no gentle means to be detached, till an auxiliary arrived, at whose influence some might shake their heads in sighing and others in laughing.

Frank Newson, now old enough to find his way alone from Dame Pearce's cottage to the vicarage-house, spent many of his leisure-hours very profitably, and having come from school and found nobody at the cottage, he came on to his second home. He knew the errand on which

Dame Pearce was gone, and had expressed his pleasure in the prospect of a companion, and his pride in the appointment of her protector. The scene to which he was introduced, made him stare. Miss Monterne was clinging to the vicar and her favourite servant, and calling on every absent person of the family, to save her from separation.

But when Frank appeared, oil seemed thrown on the waves of a tempestuous ocean ; and on hearing him greeted by the vicar in his usual accent of kind welcome, she paused and looked almost ashamed of her violent resistance. Frank, having already taken a personal interest in her removal, and perhaps not willing to forego his new deputation, took part against her, but in so gentle a way, that she listened to him. Under Mr. Broderaye's hint to him, he used his best persuasions, but yet with little better effect than converting audible into silent opposition, till, in deficiency of other argument, he knelt down, and putting his hands under her arms, and drawing her cheek to his, he began to murmur, ' Come with *me*, Carry, won't you come?—and then we will go to school, and learn to read together, and come and show Mr. Broderaye how much we have learnt ; and that will please him, and then he will come and see us, and you can come and see him with me, and I will take care of you.'

The child seemed disposed to accede to what was proposed, but on certain conditions, the first of which was most ungraciously implied in the few words——

‘ But not Mrs. Bodaye.’

Willing or unwilling, Frank was under the necessity of chiming-in with the spirit of this interdiction ; and therefore, wholly occupied with the affair of his *protectorate*, he answered ‘ No, no, dear Carry, not Mrs. Bodaye.’

This was a fit moment for the mistress of the house to withdraw ; and the vicar knew he should only have a lecture to deliver, on the little heed she ought to pay to infantine imprudence.

Frank had accomplished much ; and Mr. Broderaye, very willing to take his share of the difficulty that called for painful exertions, attended the children and their dame back to the cottage, into which Frank had the address to court little Carry, and where, under the promise that she should see Mr. ‘ Bodaye ’ and not Mrs. ‘ Bodaye,’ she was content to remain.

On his return, the vicar was not impatient to meet his lady. He told himself that he well knew the species of oratory for which he must look ; and he was not just now, in the humour for polemical discussion.

Neither was he in the humour for any thing

better : he missed the little girl most painfully : he missed through the day the trouble and annoyance of her interrupting fondness ; but he missed also what was not of the same description, the expected mortification of his wife's self-consequence—she had fortunately either too much consciousness, or too much pride, to confess that she had heard the offending words of Carilis.

The child had been settled at her cottage only a short time, when Mr. Broderaye received a visit from a stranger who had been present with Mr. Monterne in his last moments, and who now came to discharge a pious duty, by communicating to him an injunction with which he had been charged by the dying young man, that he would impress personally on the mind of Mr. Broderaye, his reliance on his guardianship and care of his child.—As if he could convey the reply to the deceased, he was to obtain from the vicar his solemn undertaking, to fulfil in every point the duties of a parent to the poor little orphan.

Mr. Broderaye could not hesitate, for no alternative in which the child's interests were considered, was offered.—He therefore, with only the insertion of the qualifying amendment, '*every possible point,*' accepted the important trust, at the same time reminding the representative of the deceased father, who was a young sailor, that his

means might fall very far short of his wishes. This was admitted ; and the bargain, in which certainly there was no mention of ‘ valuable consideration,’ stood merely on the basis of Mr. Broderaye’s elevated construction of the word duty, his hearty fondness for the little Carilis, and his consequent reluctance to renouncing her.

But his mind had not in its disturbance lost its equilibrium ; he saw clearly the propriety and expediency, the necessity as to himself, and the justice as to Carilis, of making application to her grand-father, with whose character Monterne had fully acquainted him. It was no flattering portrait that he had seen of him ; the young people had never placed themselves in a situation to see the bright colours of the picture—and under the rough usage they had met with, there was as little chance of their retaining their brilliancy, as of the vicar’s being able to discover them when he himself must be accessory to placing them in an unfavourable light.

But the experiment must be made, and he must make it in person, unless a letter which he sent as his harbinger, produced a favourable effect, and spared him the journey. It did not.

THE END OF VOLUME II.







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